

## Two Americans detained in Iraq

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The State Department Friday confirmed that two Americans had been detained in Iraq and said the U.S. embassy in Kuwait was in contact with U.N. officials investigating the matter. U.N. military observers in Kuwait said earlier Iraq had detained two Americans who crossed into its territory from Kuwait by mistake. The Pentagon said the incident happened earlier this week. Pentagon spokesman Lieutenant Commander Scott Campbell gave no further details. He said the Americans apparently "strayed across the border" and were detained by Iraq. The State Department has been in contact with the families of the Americans and the Polish government is intervening on behalf of Washington with Baghdad. The identities of the two Americans were not divulged.

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## King meets Eban

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein on Thursday met with former Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban, a Royal Court source said. The source described the audience as a courtesy meeting. Mr. Eban is a member of the ruling Labour Party in Israel.

## Israel-Syria talks resume this week

TEL AVIV (AP) — Peace negotiations between Israel and Syria will resume in Washington this week and Israel's chief negotiator said Friday that security arrangements would top the agenda. Syria suspended talks in December and it took a MidEast shuttle by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to win Damascus' agreement to return to the negotiating table.

## U.S. holds off on Moscow summit

WASHINGTON (R) — The White House Friday was non-committal about agreeing to a May summit in Moscow despite Russian President Boris Yeltsin's offer to play down military trappings in celebrating the allied victory in World War II. "There've been a lot of discussions about the modalities of a summit. There's no decision at this point," White House spokesman Mike McCurry told reporters.

## SLA man hurt

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A member of the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia was injured in a roadside bomb blast in Israel's "security zone" in South Lebanon on Friday, military officials said. They said the bomb exploded as a military vehicle drove near a village in the central sector of the zone. The militiaman was taken to hospital at the SLA headquarters in Marjayoun.

## Sudan dismisses SPLA threats

KHARTOUM (R) — The Sudanese army has dismissed threats by the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) to hit targets in government-controlled centres in northern Sudan, including Khartoum, as psychological warfare. Army spokesman Brigadier Mohammad Bashir Suleiman said the SPLA had been unable to achieve any victories in the south and no longer had any military presence, the official Al Ingaz Al Watan newspaper reported.

## Mubarak, Qaboos discuss peace

MUSCAT (AFP) — Sultan Qaboos of Oman discussed ways to advance the Middle East peace process with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who made a stopover here on his way back from Japan, the official Omani News Agency ONA reported Friday.

## 41 Talibans killed

ISLAMABAD (APP) — Forces loyal to Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani launched an attack on Taliban forces Friday, killing at least 41 of the Islamic students in an area south of the Afghan capital Kabul, Radio Kabul reported. Quoting a Defence Ministry spokesman, the broadcast monitored here said that the pro-Rabbani forces killed 36 Talibans and captured Rishkhor, an ex-communist army base.

## Qatari sugar ship docks in Iraq

NICOSIA (AP) — A Qatari ship carrying 5,000 tonnes of sugar docked Friday at Umm Qasr in southern Iraq, the official Iraqi News Agency reported. The agency added that the ship, the Alwakrah, was the second to arrive from Qatar with humanitarian aid in recent weeks. Last month, Qatar sent a gift of 2,500 tonnes of sugar to Iraq during the Holy Month of Ramadan.

## U.S. Senate approves full Jordan debt write-off

Official welcomes move as positive, hopes it would secure full congressional okay

By P.V. Vivekanand  
*Jordan Times Staff Reporter*

AMMAN — Jordan on Friday welcomed as positive a U.S. Senate approval of \$275 million in expenditure to write off about \$480 million in Jordan's official debts to the U.S. and expressed hope that the move would pass through Congress.

The Senate move, on a supplemental bill presented jointly by the dominant Republicans and minority Democrats, came Thursday. The bill authorised an expenditure of \$50 million to write off about \$115 million in Jordan's debts in fiscal 1995 (ending Sept. 30, 1995) and \$225 million to cancel the rest in fiscal 1996 (ending Sept. 30, 1996).

The Senate proposal was initiated by the Clinton administration after the House of Representatives slashed to \$50 million an administration request for \$275 million.

"It is highly positive move, given that it was introduced jointly by the Republicans and Democrats," said the official, who declined to be identified. Since it was a bipartisan proposal, the proposal stood all chances of congressional approval in its entirety.

The Clinton administration promised Jordan a write-off about \$700 million — all the Kingdom's official debts to the U.S. — late last year. It wrote off \$194 million in fiscal 1994.

The balance was to be written off in two tranches in fiscal 1995 and 1996. But in January, Mr. Christopher, in a meeting with Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Karahiti, agreed to do so in one tranche, and hence the proposal sent to Congress.

The proposal was accompanied by a letter from Mr.

(Continued on page 7)

## Israel puts final touches on scheme 'separation'

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — A \$200 million plan to enforce a security border between Israel and the West Bank will be put to the cabinet soon with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's approval, officials said Friday.

He added that the spread of Palestinian autonomy to the West Bank made separation all the more urgent. Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) are negotiating a redeployment of troops outside towns on the West Bank to allow elections to go ahead for an autonomy council.

A fence would be built along some 30 kilometres of the "green line" between Israel and the territory seized in the 1967 Middle East war.

The plan also calls for two new police stations in East Jerusalem and the deployment of greater forces in the city.

"Separation is indispensable for Israel's security," Mr. Rabin told reporters. "The measures we are going to take will guarantee a much more efficient check of people and goods (entering Israel)."

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## Jenin may be next town to see Israeli withdrawal

By Haitham Hammad  
The Associated Press

JENIN, Occupied West Bank — Signs around that this Palestinian town of 35,000 will be the next to witness an Israeli troop withdrawal and the self-rule as part of Yasser Arafat's campaign to take control of the West Bank.

A major Israeli army checkpoint at the entrance to Jenin has been dismantled, no soldiers were seen patrolling the streets. Tournaments and dozens of Palestinian prisoners have been bused out of the town's army lockup.

Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leaders predicted that Israeli soldiers might be gone for good by April or May, even before Israel and the PLO reach agreement on a troop withdrawal from other West Bank towns.

The new hope comes after months of squabbling and delay in the Israel-PLO negotiations on Israeli troop withdrawal and Palestinian general elections.

Handway is already being made in planning for the vote, which probably will be held by September, negotiators said Thursday.

In a nod to the Palestinians, Israel has agreed that the Palestinian self-rule council to be elected will have lawmaking powers.

Those issues which are under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) they (will) have the right to legislate, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres told the Associated Press.

Israel had argued the council should have only executive powers, arguing that legislative powers belong to a state, not an autonomy government.

Only last month it

appeared as if the autonomy agreements were destined for failure. Israel insisted it would not redeploy until Mr. Arafat did a better job foiling attacks by militants on Israelis. Mr. Arafat promised he would, but did not appear to deliver.

But since last week, Israel and the Palestinians have agreed on a target date for a redeployment agreement — July 1 — and have stipulated that elections will be held within 60 days after the signing of the withdrawal treaty.

Mr. Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin are to meet this month to negotiate the terms of troops withdrawal.

With the deadlines in place, the period of uncertainty appears to be over. Target dates can still be missed, but experience in previous Israel-PLO negotiations shows that a deadline may provide the necessary push for reaching agreement.

Mr. Peres also said the two sides have agreed that 1,000 foreign observers will monitor the balloting, with about half from Arab countries.

Meanwhile, Mr. Arafat's security men have already quietly taken over law enforcement in West Bank.

Palestinians were confident that the first soldiers could be pulling out of Jenin even before July 1. An Israeli official confirmed "Jenin first" was on the table, but that it was too early to set a date for a troop pullout.

In Jenin, a farming town in the northern West Bank, expectations were running high Thursday.

"We are ready to take control," said Jalal Ahmad, whose Jenin clothing shop displayed T-shirts imprinted with Arafat pictures. "It will be a great day when President Arafat visits us here."

## World armsmakers flock to UAE defence bazaar

DUBAI (UPI) — The world's top armsmakers are gathering in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to show off their latest hardware at the oil-rich Gulf region's largest weapons bazaar.

The focus is mainly on the UAE itself, which has the longest shopping list among Gulf Arab states spurred and determined to counter Iran's rearmament programme.

Although oil prices in the past two years have forced some Gulf states to slow down their ambitious weapons plans, the region is still a key growth area for armsmakers suffering from post-cold war defence budget cuts in the West.

Saudi Arabia, the region's largest arms buyer with more than \$30 billion worth of deals mainly with U.S. and British manufacturers, has frozen new orders for 1994 and 1995.

A well-placed Arab analyst said the kingdom could consider buying new weapons next year if it succeeded in overcoming cash-flow shortages.

But some of the 500 firms at Abu Dhabi's IDEX '95, the International Defence Exhibition, which opens on March 19, hope their hosts would award or declare intentions on multi-billion-dollar deals for frigates, helicopters and up to 80 warplanes.

"UAE might award one of the major deals at IDEX. Many states are guessing

which way it will go," said another Arab expert.

There are other deals for communication and other equipment also in the works and could be concluded at IDEX. They are less flashy, but still they are worth a lot of money."

The only main UAE deal shortlisted so far is for frigate-based helicopters with anti-submarine capability. Competing are the Seahawk by U.S. United Technologies Corp's subsidiary Sikorsky, the British Super Lynx by GKN Plc's Westland subsidiary and the French-designed Eurocopter.

The most lucrative of the pending deals is for the 80 long-range strike aircraft which some experts expect to be announced later this year but shortlisting is apparently underway and might not be ready for announcement at IDEX.

At the last IDEX in 1993, the UAE awarded France's GIAT industries a \$3.62 billion contract for LeClerc battle tanks and Westinghouse Electric Corp secured a \$300 million contract for a communication, command and control system.

Experts say the recent French defence pact with the UAE could give France's Mirage 2000-5 and next-generation Rafale an edge in the fiercely contested fighter plane order.

Lockheed Corp and McDonnell Douglas Corp of

the United States modified their F/A-18 and F/A-18 aircraft, respectively, to meet the UAE requirement.

Russia's Sukhoi is also bidding for the deal while Britain offered to lease Tornado planes to the UAE until the next-generation Eurofighter 2000 was ready for export.

High-ranking military and political officials have visited the UAE in recent months to rally support for their weapons hub Abu Dhabi has so far not divulged its intentions.

"There will be real work done during IDEX and some firms will make real progress. The UAE will give strong indication of its intentions," said an Arab expert.

During IDEX, the world's first major defence show of the year, the Dutch will display the M type frigate as part of efforts to secure a UAE order, closely contested by the U.S. Newport News Shipbuilding's type 21 frigate.

"This has not been shortlisted yet but the contract could go out this year," said the expert. French, German and two British yards are also in the running for the deal.

Newport, a subsidiary of Tenneco Inc., won a \$200 million project in December to construct a shipbuilding yard in Abu Dhabi and experts say the firm can offer a lower unit price as most maintenance work could be done in the UAE.

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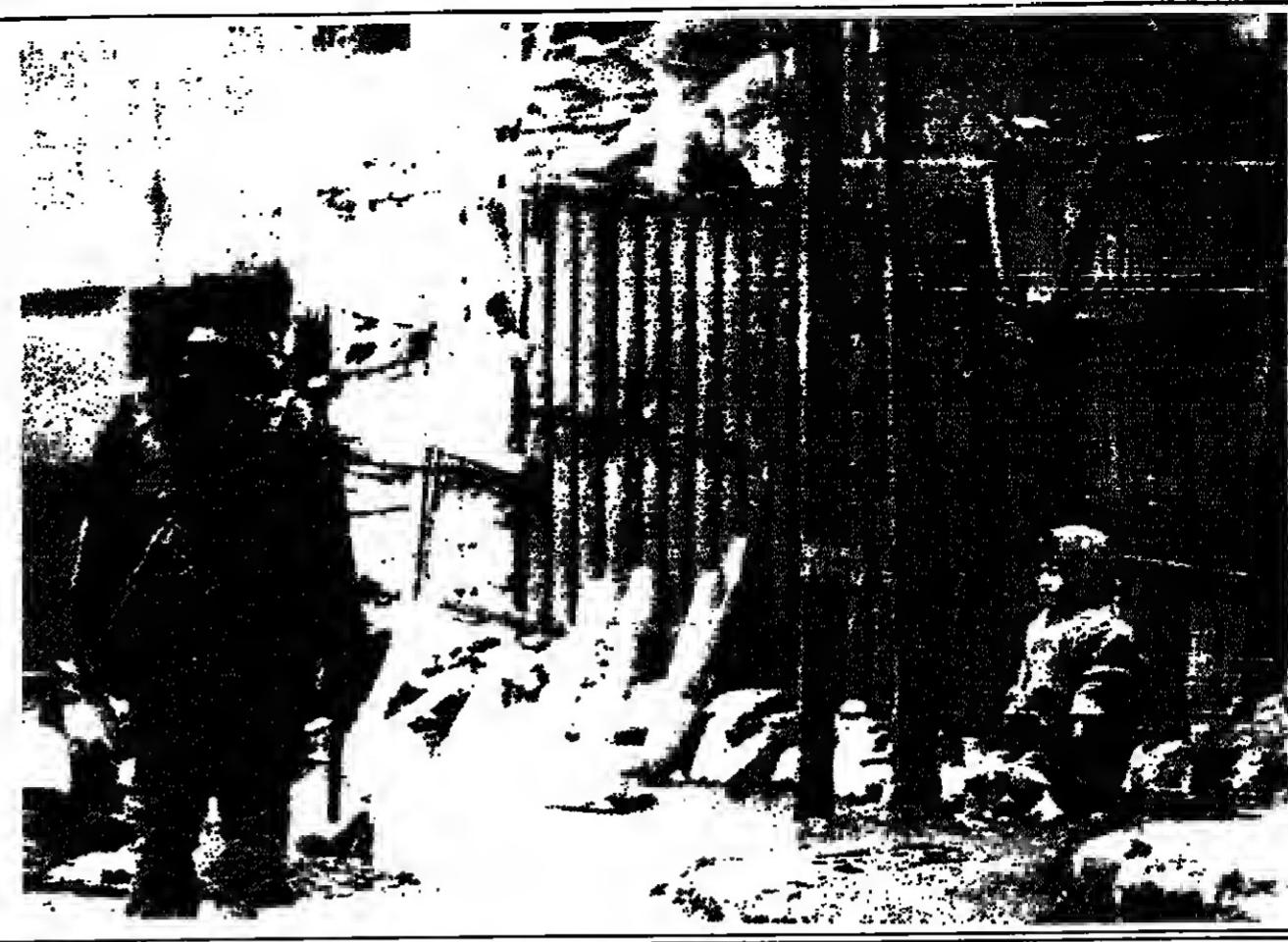
## Riots in Istanbul

A LITTLE girl watches a Turkish soldier patrolling the streets of Istanbul's district of Gazli. Turkish authorities on Friday lifted a curfew from one of the districts where sectarian violence has left at least 28 dead this week, the Anatolia news agency said (see page 12).

At least five patrol bomb attacks rocked Istanbul.

In Geneva, Swiss police said firebombs were thrown at Turkish targets in Basel, damaging two travel agencies but injuring no one. Three Turkish travel agencies in Zurich were hit in similar incidents Wednesday night.

In Germany, Turkish businesses in five German cities were damaged overnight. There were no reported injuries. Bonn police linked the arson attack, which targeted Turkish businesses in Germany for the fourth night running, to the Istanbul clashes.



## Gore to visit five Mideast countries, Jericho

WASHINGTON (USIA) —

U.S. Vice President Al Gore is scheduled to arrive in Cairo Monday on the first leg of a six-day tour of four Arab countries, Israel and the Palestinian autonomous region of Jericho where he will meet with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

After three days in Cairo, the vice president and his wife will travel to Jordan on March 21, Oman and Saudi Arabia on March 22, and Israel and Jericho on March 23 and 24 before returning home.

In a statement, the vice president said the trip "will allow me to renew some old friendships, while offering me the chance to see Oman and Saudi Arabia for the first time."

He stressed that he would like to explore a "cultural dialogue" between the United States and the countries he is visiting. He particularly pointed to his upcoming

meeting with Dr. Hamid Al Gabid, secretary general of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC). He added that he hopes to continue with him the discussions he had earlier this year with the grand mufti of Egypt, Dr. Mohammad Sayyed Al Tanawi. There was no explanation of the substance of these discussions.

He added that his trip to Saudi Arabia is "particularly appropriate" since the two countries are this year "celebrating 50 years of friendship and close relationship which began with the meeting between King Abdul Aziz Ben Saud and U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt aboard a U.S. ship in the Red Sea.

Recalling that the U.S. government has had a "vigorous and consistent" commitment to the Middle East peace process, Mr. Gore stated, "we have seen challenges to peace, but the partners involved are continuing to tackle the difficult, fundamental issues involved."

He also seemed to assure Palestinians and Jordanians with whom the Israelis have concluded peace agreements when he expressed confidence that "there will be economic benefits from the peace process for all the countries of the region." He cautioned, however, "these benefits may not be immediate, but they are inevitable."

The vice president's trip follows the visit to the Middle East this week by Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who was able to get Syria and Israel to agree on an imminent resumption of their negotiations in Washington.

Mr. Gore's trip will coincide with another by a U.S. cabinet official. Secretary of Defence William Perry was to begin a one-week visit Friday to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar.

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Meeting with Dr. Hamid Al Gabid, secretary general of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC). He added that he hopes to continue with him the discussions he had earlier this year with the grand mufti of Egypt, Dr. Mohammad Sayyed Al Tanawi. There was no explanation of the substance of these discussions.

He added that his trip to Saudi Arabia is "particularly appropriate" since the two countries are this year "celebrating 50 years of friendship and close relationship which began with the meeting between King Abdul Aziz Ben Saud and U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt aboard a U.S. ship in the Red Sea.

Recalling that the U.S. government has had a "vigorous and consistent" commitment to the Middle East peace process, Mr. Gore stated, "we have seen challenges to peace, but the partners involved are continuing to tackle the difficult, fundamental issues involved."

He also seemed to assure

Palestinians and Jordanians with whom the Israelis have concluded peace agreements when he expressed confidence that "there will be economic benefits from the peace process for all the countries of the region." He cautioned, however, "these benefits may not be immediate, but they are inevitable."

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# Home News

JORDAN TIMES, SATURDAY, MARCH 18, 1995 3



A JAFO-FRANCO EVENING: Her Royal Highness Princess Basma and Chairman Jean-Philippe Rouchon who has been working with JAFO for almost a year. The concert, organised in cooperation with the French Cultural Centre and the French embassy in Amman, was attended by senior army officers, embassy staff and invited guests (Petra photo)

## Journalists, staff of party papers not eligible for JPA membership

AMMAN (Petra) — Journalists and other staff of political party newspapers are ineligible for membership in the Jordan Press Association (JPA), the Bureau for the Interpretation of the Law at the Prime Ministry said in a decision it has taken recently and only released Friday.

The bureau said it took its decision after reviewing the Press and Publication Law, the Political Parties Law and the JPA Law.

It said that in accordance with the press law, political parties could not be considered as publishers and therefore personnel who pub-

lish party newspaper did not qualify for JPA membership.

The bureau made of three senior judges and two government legal advisors, based its ruling on the Press and Publication Law's definition of a publisher of a newspaper, which, it said, did not include political parties.



Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation President Masa Thibyan, organisation Secretary General Mohammad Malah, representing the organisation's International Arbitration Centre of Jordan, Iranian Charge d'Affaires in Amman Sa'eed Al Batini and a representa-

tive of the Iranian Chamber of Industry and Miners Arbitration Centre meet to discuss exchanging lists of arbiters and cooperating in implementing rules of arbitration (Petra photo)

## Woman found hanged; suspect arrested

By Rana Hussein  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A 24-year-old Ajloun woman who had been reported missing since Monday was found hanging from a tree in a forest near Muthalaat Eshlefina; police arrested a male suspect in connection with the reported murder hours after the woman's body was found, police sources said.

A police official told the Jordan Times Friday that a 32-year-old man, identified as Ahmad M., was arrested Thursday shortly after the body of the missing woman was discovered by police.

"We received a tip that a man from Al Mazra could be the prime suspect in the

case," the official said. According to the official, when the police arrested the man, he showed no resistance and confessed to committing the crime.

He added that the suspect used his bare hands to strangle the woman, then he tied the victim's scarf around her neck and hanged her from a tree with the same scarf.

According to one source, speaking on condition of anonymity, the woman, identified as Khuloud M.H., was reported missing from her home in Ein Jash in Minday.

The source said the suspect, who is married and is employed as a baker in Al Mazra, had a relation with the woman, and that "he had

asked for her hand in marriage, but her family had refused."

The suspect had a physical relationship with the woman, and when her family refused his proposal for marriage, he decided to kill her in revenge," the source said.

The source said that the suspect took the victim on March 13 to the forest, and after a heated discussion about their situation, he killed her.

According to Civil Defence Department (CDD) officials, the woman's body was taken to hospital for an autopsy.

"I can't give any details concerning the victim or the crime, all I can say that there was no indication of a rape," the CDD official said.

## NMC, Instituto Cervantes to present Spanish guitarist Josep Henriquez

AMMAN (J.T.) — The National Music Conservatory (NMC) and Instituto Cervantes in Jordan tonight present a guitar recital by renowned Spanish guitarist Josep Henriquez at the Royal Cultural Centre, an NMC statement said.

Born in Barcelona, Mr. Henriquez is considered among today's finest classical guitarists.

He has played throughout Canada, Turkey, Russia, Africa, Central and South America and the United States.

Mr. Henriquez has partici-

pated in international festivals, performed as guest soloist with major symphony and chamber orchestras, such as the San Diego Symphony Orchestra, the Sondervil Land Symphony Orchestra and has also given recitals at such prestigious halls as the Tchaikovsky Theatre in Moscow, Wigmore Hall in London, the Library of Congress in Washington and the Beijing Concert Hall, the statement said.

In 1981 Mr. Henriquez was the guitar professor at the Music and Arts Institute of San Francisco, California and since 1982 he has been head

of the Guitar Department at the Music Conservatory of Granollers in Barcelona.

In 1992 he was invited to create the first classical guitar department in China at the Central Conservatory in Beijing. In addition to performing, Mr. Henriquez is often requested to give master classes and lecture demonstrations around the world and has served as judge in international competitions.

His musical personality and instrumental technique have earned him an international reputation, according to the NMC statement.

## WHAT'S GOING ON

### FILM

★ Film (in German) entitled "Zweikampf" (with subtitles in English) at Goethe-Institut at 8:00 p.m.

### GUITAR RECITAL

★ Guitar recital by Josep Henriquez (organised by the National Music Conservatory and Instituto Cervantes) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

### EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Exhibition of abstract art by Abeer Bawab at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by several artists entitled "Faces" at the Balqa Art Gallery, Fuheis.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Nazli Iremecik at Alia Art Gallery.
- ★ Exhibition of art by Rula Shukairy at the French Cultural Centre.

## Bahraini information minister praises Jordan's efforts to rebuild Arab solidarity

AMMAN (Petra) — Bahraini Information Minister Tareq Al Mu'ayad Friday described Jordanian-Bahraini relations as strong and solid, and said Bahrain supports the Kingdom's efforts to rally Arab ranks.

Mr. Mu'ayad, who arrived in Amman Friday on a three-day official visit to the Kingdom upon an invitation by Deputy Prime Minister and Information Minister Khaled Karaki, said the Arab World was currently in need of solidarity to be able to counter challenges facing it.

He commended efforts by Jordan to mend Arab fences and said Bahrain fully backs such efforts.

"At a time when we find Jordan always supporting its Arab nation in all its causes, we want to support it in order to resolve all inter-Arab disputes and conflicts," Mr. Mu'ayad said in an arrival statement.

He told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that Bahrain will support any effort taken through the Arab League to mend Arab fences.

Expressing his country's support for Jordanian calls to unify ranks, he said Bahrain

supports Jordan in its endeavours as it supports other Arab countries taking such moves.

Mr. Mu'ayad voiced pride in visiting Jordan and said he will convey to His Majesty King Hussein the greetings of the Emir of Bahrain, Sheikh Issa Ben Salman Al Khalifa, and those of the Bahraini people and government.

Mr. Mu'ayad is accompanied on the visit by a delegation comprising Ministry of Information Assistant Undersecretary for Radio and Television Affairs Hala Al Umran, Director of Bahrain Radio Abdul Rahman Abdulla, Director of the News Department at the Radio and Television Corporation Abdul Al Rayani, head of the corporation's television production Qahtan Al Qahtani, Al-Ayyam newspaper Chief Editor Nabil Al Hammam and Al Khalij News Director General Anwar Abdul Rahman.

Mr. Mu'ayad will hold talks with Dr. Karaki on bilateral relations in media-related fields and means of enhancing them.

The minister will also meet with senior Jordanian offi-



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Information Khaled Karaki Friday receives Bahraini Minister of Information Tareq Al

Mu'ayad upon his arrival to Amman with a delegation of Bahraini media officials (Petra photo)

cials and representatives of Jordanian mass media institutions.

He was received at the airport by Dr. Karaki, Secretary General of the Ministry of Information Nayef Maula, Director General of the Radio and Television Corporation Ihsan Ramzi, Director General of the Jordan News Agency, Petra Abdulah Utoum, Director of the Press and Publications Department Muhammad

Amin, Radio Jordan Director Hashem Khreisat and Bahraini Charge d'Affaires in Amman Abdul Rahman Al

Suleiman.

The two countries to exchange radio and television messages, hold training programmes for personnel working for information services, coordinate in the use of satellites for radio and television broadcasts, exchange radio and television news and other programmes, conduct joint production work, coordinate publications and the work of the national news agencies and exchange publications and media expertise.

Last month, Jordan and Bahrain signed a draft executive programme to launch cooperation in information-related fields. The draft

agreement, signed by the

Jordanian side by Mr. Maula,

who led a Jordanian delegation to Bahrain last month, and Ms. Umran, provides for

institutions that will answer these questionnaires.

He added that the department started field work which involved distributing these questionnaires to the institutions.

The third stage, he said, will entail writing down and analysing the results of the questionnaire which will be followed by preparing a detailed report.

He said the questionnaires were based on ones prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

Mr. Majali said the HCST earlier conducted three surveys for the same purpose. The first was in 1978, the second in 1980 and the third in 1986, he said.

## HCST survey to define national scientific, technological needs

AMMAN (Petra) — The Higher Council for Science and Technology (HCST) is conducting a survey to define national scientific and technological needs and capabilities.

Mohammad Majali, director of the survey project, said the results of the survey will be used in preparing a national plan for scientific research and developing specialised manpower to benefit the country's development process.

In an interview with the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Mr. Majali said the survey aims to pinpoint technical problems facing national institutions and to define their needs for qualified and well-trained personnel.

In addition, the survey will

help define the needs national institutions for scientific and technological research and services, he said.

The survey, he noted, constitutes a base for developing science and technology policies and their applications in Jordan.

It will include all ministers and private and public institutions employing at least five people, he said, adding that the number of these ministries and institutions totals 8,000 according to 1994 figures available at the department of statistics.

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In addition, the survey will

try of Social Development.

ISRA, an international voluntary organisation, was founded in 1981 as the Islamic African Relief Agency (IARA) in Sudan. Today in Africa the agency is still known as IARA, but this section now comes under the umbrella of ISRA in its international network.

The agency was founded by Sudanese doctors who had been involved with refugees and displaced persons as a result of civil conflict in Sudan during the 1970s.

It is registered with the U.N. in New York Geneva and Vienna and is also a member of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA).

Having begun with one small office in Khartoum 14 years ago, ISRA now boasts 29 offices worldwide.

"It (the project) is very honourable ... and I am pleased the Japanese people can be helpful," Mr. Keida said at the ceremony.

## Islamic Relief Agency, Japan sign contract to support small income-generating project

By Cathy King  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The government of Japan signed a contract Thursday with the Islamic Relief Agency (ISRA) in support of the agency's social and economic projects and within the framework of the Japanese Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects (GAGP).

The contract, signed between Japanese Ambassador Yuji Ikeda and ISRA's Regional Director for Middle East Affairs Khaled Sudane, guarantees ISRA \$88,266 and will be extended by Japan's GAGP.

"The signing of the contract will trigger the realisation of an income-generating project ... particularly in Asma Mifti refugee camp, Hartha, west of Mafrat, Mazzar, Taybeh and Tafieh," Mr. Sudane said.

The grant awarded to ISRA will finance a project aiming at self-sufficiency among Palestinian refugees and others living below the poverty line in Irbid, Karak and Tafieh.

It will entail the plantation of thyme, a medicinal herb, on 40 dunums of arable land in the districts of Karak and Tafieh and 30 dunums in Irbid district.

Thyme, being a sought-after commodity locally and abroad because of its fine taste and smell, and medicinal quality, is a very good source of continuous income for the beneficiaries," said Mr. Sudane.

According to ISRA statement, the project will take two years to complete

and intends to benefit a maximum of 200 families.

"At the end of the first year it is expected to reach the break-even point, and by the end of the second year it will gain profits for the targeted group," the statement said.

Targated families are those who live beneath the poverty line, as defined by the Ministry of Social Development. About 50 families who fall into this category and own small plots of land will be selected.

The statement said the land area may be as small as 2x4 square metres or as large as one dunum.

Apart from the families, who are expected to attain self-sufficiency after two years, the statement said the project will also "answer the need for thyme in the local market and will help create a new batch of workers in the field of marketing and agriculture."

In turn, it adds, the project will not only be answering a part of the unemployment problem, but will aid agricultural advancement in the region as well.

Thyme is easy to cultivate, growing in almost every kind of soil and able to withstand temperatures ranging from summer heat to frosts. Its roots are also able to resist dryness.

The Ministry of Agriculture will provide assistance in planting, cultivation, irrigation, grass and weed elimination, fertilisation as well as a drying process for the herb to avoid wastage and decay, said the statement.

Among those in attendance at the signing ceremony were: Sudanese Ambassador Abdul Rahman Numrei, former Minister of Social Development, Mohamed Saeed, resident representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), representatives of the Crown Prince's Office and the Minis-

try of Social Development.

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## A balancing point between divergent styles

By Ian Atalla  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The theme which Rula Shukairy so singularly and exclusively focuses on in her current exhibit of roughly 50 paintings is not a new one, internationally speaking.

For over a century, the barren and thoroughly Biblical-looking wastelands of rock and mountain which engulf Jordan and the rest of the Middle East have long fascinated foreign eyes, and been a frequent staple for artists from outside who come to visit.

But for the native artists of the region who are Ms. Shukairy's counterparts, these Arabian rockscapes have usually seemed to exert markedly less pull — they have dealt with them not only more infrequently, but in a significantly more subdued manner as well.

Ms. Shukairy says that in her work, however, such scenery is a constant preoccupation. "When I see the earth unchanged," she ex-

plained, "unplayed with by modern civilisation, I feel somehow more relaxed, more free."

Cross-cultural comparison can be a hazy, convoluted, and often controversial undertaking. But it is intriguing to put Ms. Shukairy's works on display from where their physical counterparts actually lie. "I never plan that I will just sit and do any particular painting," said Ms. Shukairy, explaining just how thoroughly freeform her approach has become. "I have to have a mood, and then

## South Korea offers North olive branch as nuclear deal wavars

SEOUL (Agencies) — South Korea pledged Friday to press ahead with plans to do business with the Communist North despite a simmering and potentially damaging row over Pyongyang's Unification Minister Rha Woong-Bae said Southern businesses should press ahead with bids to forge contacts with the North, despite frosty inter-Korean diplomatic relations.

"Private-level South-North economic exchanges... will be promoted steadily despite the North's double-edged attitude," Mr. Rha told parliament.

Shortly after his conciliatory speech, Pyongyang responded with a hardline statement accusing Washington and Seoul of working together to scupper a U.S.-North Korean deal over nuclear technology.

An unsourced report carried by the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said Washington had committed an "impardonable insult" in insisting the North accept nuclear reactors made in the South as part of the pact they.

### Blast rocks Greek TV station

ATHENS (AP) — An explosion, possibly from an anti-tank missile, rocked the premises of Greece's private Mega Channel television station during a news bulletin Wednesday night, causing damage but no injuries.

The blast occurred at 8:50 p.m. (1850 GMT), the station announced. It broadcast footage of a hole in the wall of a second-floor office belonging to journalist and producer Pavlos Tsimas.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility.

Mega Channel, one of the country's two largest stations, is located in the Athens suburb of Palaio Faliro. Mr. Tsimas produces a weekly talk show. His office was vacant at the time.

"There was no warning before the attack, we could

sign last October. This... clearly indicates the United States is openly seeking confrontation with the Democratic People's Republic of (North) Korea, going against the spirit of the DPRK-U.S. agreement," said the report, monitored in Tokyo.

Further adding to the inter-Korean gloom, Seoul's Defense Ministry reported to parliament that the North Korean Air Force was currently staging its biggest war rehearsal since 1991.

The ministry reported said Pyongyang's airborne exercises included air strikes by tactical fighters, night flights by low-flying aircraft, bombing and troop landing drills and night-time combat rehearsals.

Analysts in Seoul also mused over recent promotions in the North Korean military, believed to be the key factor in ensuring the power base of de facto leader Kim Jong-il. The younger Kim has been in charge since his father Kim Il-Sung died last July.

The recent elevation of four generals to North Korea's Communist Party Central Military Commission did not herald an imminent shake-up of its ruling elite, the analysts said.

Their elevation followed frequent visits by Kim Jong-il to military bases in recent weeks. Experts in Seoul said the visits were aimed at consolidating his grip on the military.

The appointments appear to be a feeler see the response from other members in the army," said Park Hun-Ok, senior fellow at the Institute of North Korea Studies.

South Korea has been hoping for closer exchanges with the North following the deal last October between Washington and Pyongyang under which the North said it would dismantle its nuclear programme in exchange for safer light-water reactors supplied from, and financed by, the West.

But the North has put the whole deal in doubt by refusing to accept one of its basic elements — that the reactors are South Korean-made.

Under the accord, North Korea would freeze a nuclear programme suspected of being capable of developing a nuclear arsenal in return for light-water reactors and alternative energy supplies.

Mr. Rha said Seoul was considering "a variety of measures" in case the North pulls out of the deal.

"The coming six months are very important to future inter-Korean relations whether or not a reactor supply contract will be concluded," he said.

In another KCNA report Friday, North Korea said it had proposed a meeting with a South Korean dissident group in third country to arrange joint celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japan on Aug. 15.

KCNA said the proposal was made by a spokesman of North Korea's committee preparing the celebrations.



Cuban President Fidel Castro visits the Place Vendôme in Paris. A row grew in France over a visit by Mr. Castro, with politicians denouncing him as a dictator and protesting the red carpet welcome granted by President François Mitterrand. He left for Havana Thursday (AFP photo)

### Castro savours a day in French country

CHABLIS, France (AP) — Fidel Castro, slightly buzzed from vintage Chardonnay, emerged from a cellar with the bright colours of a wine-maker's knighthood on his olive green tonic.

"I like it here," Mr. Castro said, after a madcap ride through the backroads of Burgundy, the last leg of a European trip that effectively took Cuba out of its diplomatic isolation.

"I don't know what my

visit to Europe did for Cuba," an ebullient Castro told the Associated Press before leaving. "but it did a lot for me. My strongest impression? Chablis wine."

He came to visit Gerard Bourgoin, a French poultry mogul who went to Cuba in 1992 to sell chickens and befriended Mr. Castro by serving him chilled Chablis along with ham he had brought from home.

After addressing the poverty summit in Copenhagen, lurching with French President François Mitterrand and speaking to UNESCO in Paris, Mr. Castro came to see how Bourgoin slaughtered chickens.

Then, in a motorcade of flashing lights and discreetly hidden firearms, Mr. Castro was taken 30 miles (55 kms) across rolling farmland, through old stone villages, to the vineyards of Chablis.

### British war heroine Odette dies

LONDON (R) — Odette Hallowes, one of Britain's most famous military heroines, has died quietly at home after a life of intrigue, gallantry and torture in which she came to epitomise allied resistance to fascism.

Odette died Monday at the age of 82 but family members requested that her death be kept quiet until after a private funeral, which was held this week on the outskirts of London.

Immortalised in film as the very model of female courage, Odette worked as an agent alongside the French resistance during World War II, although her actual value was later challenged.

She was tortured by the Gestapo after being captured in 1943, but never buckled. The Gestapo seared her back with a red-hot poker and pulled out all her toe-nails, but French born Odette refused to name two other British agents.

In 1946 she became the first woman to be awarded the George Cross, Britain's highest civilian medal for gallantry, and a year later she married the man who had been her commanding officer in France, Peter Churchill.

At the time of the award

she said: "I have never been very strong, not very brave. I am just a very simple, ordinary sort of woman who is very

pleased to be back with her children."

Odette, a film about her war experiences made in 1950 starring Anna Neagle, confirmed her as a national heroine.

But in 1958, six prominent former members of the French resistance challenged her and her husband to provide evidence of a single effective act of hostility against the Germans.

In 1964 an official history

of the Special Operations Executive (SOE), which organised espionage and subversive activities, claimed "the military value of their mission was slight" and cast doubt on Odette's version of events.

### Lord Lovat, Scottish war hero, dies at 83

BEAULY, Scotland (AP) — World War II hero Lord Lovat, who led his commando unit onto the Normandy beaches while his personal bagpipers played, died Thursday at his home in the Scottish highlands. He was 83.

Lord Lovat, described by Winston Churchill as "the handsomest man who ever cut a throat," was one of Britain's most illustrious soldiers, honoured with the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) and Military Cross (MC), as well as the Croix de Guerre and the Norwegian Cross.

It was the first joint news conference of the two leaders since the October 1991 signing of the Paris peace treaty ending more than two decades of war. The treaty set in motion the United Nations' biggest operation to move the country to democracy.

The approximately 40 nations and institutions backing the transition have a vested interest in making the project work.

Mr. Hun Sen said Khmer Rouge combatants had been reduced from 8,000 men to 2,000 in the 16 months since the government came to power, making them a negligible force.

"The political situation has changed categorically," Mr. Hun Sen said. "The Khmer Rouge no longer constitute a political and military organisation. They have become an armed group, rebels."

The Khmer Rouge, responsible for a reign of terror in the 1970s, signed the 1991 peace treaty, then boycotted U.N.-supervised elections in 1993 and continues to rebel against the central government.

Lord Lovat, ill and frail, was unable to attend their

funeral. His title passes to grandson Simon Fraser, an 18-year-old student.

At the beginning of World War II, Lord Lovat became captain of the Lovat Scouts, a Scottish unit created by his family to fight in the Boer War at the turn of the century.

Then he led the 1st Special Service (commando) Brigade, ordering his pipers to play Highland Laddie, Blue Bonnets Over The Border and Road To The Isles, as the commandos stormed German shoreline defences on Sword Beach on D-Day, 1944.

A few miles away Maj. John Howard and his paratroopers holding a bridge known reinforcements were coming when they heard the distant wail of the pipes.

Lord Lovat, educated at Ampleforth School and Magdalene College, Oxford, inherited his title at the age of 17.

After the war, Lord Lovat became a prominent agriculturalist.

The late Sir Iain Moncreiffe of that ilk, an authority on the Scottish clans, died within eight days of each other. His heir Simon, 54-year-old Master of Lovat, died of heart attack during a hunt at the castle. Andrew, 42, was killed in a safari accident in Tanzania.

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### Dinosaur egg craze grips China

BEIJING (R) — Avid collectors identify them with a tick of the tongue. They are fossilised dinosaur eggs, the latest craze in China, where collectors are numerous and smuggling rampant, officials said Friday. The fad has led to the discovery by Chinese researchers of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) in one such egg, a find Chinese scientists hailed this week as a major advance for mankind that could add fact to the fictional hit movie Jurassic Park, in which dinosaurs were brought back to life. "History has given China a chance for a breakthrough in science," lead scientist Professor Chen Zhanliang told the Guangming Daily. The egg that supplied this week's breakthrough was found by a collector in Xixia County in Henan province in central China, a veritable mine of fossil nests and a centre for treasure hunters, a local official said by telephone. "We have a higher concentration of eggs as well as more varieties than other places and they are better preserved," the secretary of Xixia's government office told Reuters. Dinosaur eggs were first found in Xixia in 1993, he said. "The nests cover 80 square kilometres and we have found 5,000 fossils, and we have found 5,000 fossils, to prevent theft and smuggling has yielded results."

### Silence is golden

VAEXJOE, Sweden (AP) — No talking, no television, no radio, no mail, no newspapers. For 33 days, 40 people will live together in total silence for a meditation seminar in Sweden, the daily Smaalandsposten said. The participants, aged 17 to 56 and hailing from the United States, Britain and Scandinavia, will gather in the small southern village of Hamneda to attain "pure consciousness" and "preserve their internal concentration" through transcendental meditation and yoga, the newspaper said. Using only gestures, facial expressions and body language to communicate for the month, the group will then be allowed to talk to their heart's content for the remaining two months of the course.

### Madness Of King George bulletin sold for \$920

LONDON (AP) — Some things — like a monarch's madness — are better kept at home. A British collector paid nearly four times the projected price for an anonymous 1810 bulletin announcing King George III's final descent into madness, because he wanted it to remain in England, Phillips Auctioneers said. King George III suffered from a disease doctors now believe to be porphyria, which subjects sufferers to momentary bouts of insanity. One such bout in 1788 — precipitating Britain's regency crisis — is the subject of the current film, "The Madness Of King George." Nigel Hawthorne, who plays the king, has been nominated for a best actor Oscar this year. King George recovered in 1789. But a collapse 21 years later prompted the bulletin, which was put up for sale Thursday by an anonymous seller. The bulletin, headed "Most secret," begins, "The King continues as bad as ever. The gradual increase of his irritation, without fever, which is the worst of all symptoms," and concludes: "He is most ungovernable, and violent."

Phillips said the bulletin appears to have been addressed to the Marquess of Buckingham, a privy councillor and one of the king's closest advisors, and written by Buckingham agent, Sir William Henry Fremantle. Fremantle thwarted the king's enemies from passing the regency on his son, the Prince of Wales, in 1789. But by 1810, the king's madness was deemed irreversible: The bulletin is dated Nov. 1, by Nov. 6 the king's physician, Robert Willis, had him strait-jacketed. The regency was passed to the Prince of Wales in 1811. George III lived another 10 years, and his son was crowned George IV in 1820. The auction house had set a range of between £100-150 (\$160 to \$240) for the bulletin. It was sold for £755 (\$920) to an anonymous English collector, who decided he wanted such a special piece of English history to stay in the country," according to a Phillips statement.

### Singapore hanging sparks fresh protest in Manila

SINGAPORE (R) — Singapore hanged Filipina maid Flor Contemplacion for double murder Friday after rejecting an appeal from Philippines President Fidel Ramos and an 11th-hour plea by her lawyers.

The pre-dawn execution sparked fresh protests in Manila with one women's group vowing to disrupt next month's visit to the Philippines by Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong.

A Communist death squad has also threatened to retaliate against Singaporeans and the island state government. The Singapore government said Friday its embassy in Manila had received threats ahead of the execution.

However, Singapore had no plans to withdraw dependents of diplomats based in Manila, a Foreign Affairs Ministry spokesman said. Singapore's relations with the Philippines would also not be affected by the hanging.

In the Philippines, there were expressions of outrage as well as grief.

Liza Masa, head of a

National Leftist Women's group, said protesters would disrupt Prime Minister Goh's visit to Manila next month.

"We are going to honk him. We will be sorry he ever came here," Ms. Masa of the Gabriela Group told reporters.

Security was unusually tight at the entrance to Changi Prison where the execution took place, according to reporters who had been present for previous Singapore death watches. The entrance is as close as outsiders are allowed during a hanging.

Several police officers were outside the gates on patrol, and others, some wearing bullet-proof vests and carrying automatic rifles could be seen just in side. Police dogs were also on hand.

But Singapore academics said they did not see the episode having an adverse impact on bilateral ties. Singapore has large investments in Philippines in shipping and energy-related projects.

In rejecting the appeal from President Ramos for a stay of execution, the Singapore government said it had

made a detailed rebuttal of some of the alleged new evidence in the case. A police statement announcing the hanging Friday said: "Contemplacion had admitted to both the murders to the police investigators and at all stages of the proceedings." She had "led police to recover valuables and jewelry" belonging to the strangled maid, the statement said. Singapore has generally shown little inclination to give in to protests over its justice system, which includes death not just for murder but for certain other offenses like drug trafficking. It also inflicts caning for a number of crimes.

Contemplacion's execution was one of four Friday. Three drug traffickers were also hanged in Singapore, bringing to over 100 the number executed under its drug laws since 1975.

# World News

## Chirac passes EU test in French presidency race

PARIS (Agencies) — Conservative Paris Mayor Jacques Chirac, favourite for the presidency, has cleared a major hurdle by rallying his divided camp behind a new-found enthusiasm for European Union (EU), analysts said Friday.

Mr. Chirac may have defused Europe as an issue in the April-May election by staking out positions similar to those of his two closest rivals, Socialist Lionel Jospin and fellow Gaullist Prime Minister Edouard Balladur.

Political analyst Alain Duhamel said oo' Europe I radiate that Europe was the last big test for Mr. Chirac before the first round of the presidential election on April 23 and he had successfully shown himself a pragmatist with coherent policies.

"Europe: Chirac reinvents lukewarm water," the left-wing daily *Liberation* said in a headline voicing surprise at Mr. Chirac's skill in avoiding offending either Euro-enthusiasts or sceptics.

Long a waver on European integration, Mr. Chirac appealed for reconciliation in France over the goals of the European Union and its Maastricht Treaty in a keynote foreign policy speech Thursday.

He said it was time to move from "a technocratic Europe" to "a people's Europe." To give it "face and a voice," Mr. Chirac urged the appointment of a president of the European council to serve a three-year term and represent the EU internationally.

Even Mr. Balladur's lieutenants, increasingly conceding the possibility of a Chirac victory, found little to criticise in the Paris mayor's policies.

Mr. Chirac omitted earlies calls for a new referendum before introducing a common currency.

"What was said yesterday was satisfactory," European Affairs Minister Alain Lamassoure, a Balladur supporter, said in a Radio Monte



Conservative presidential candidate Jacques Chirac shakes hands with supporters during a campaign meeting at Meaux. The French presidential elections first round will be held April 23, followed by the second round two weeks later (AFP photo).

Carlo interview Friday.

An opinion poll published in the daily *l'Informatif* Friday indicated that Mr. Chirac, twice prime minister and twice a failed presidential candidate, would win 28 per cent of the vote in the first round, trailed by Mr. Jospin on 21 and Mr. Balladur with just 16.

The poll suggested Mr. Chirac could crush either when the top two candidates go through to the runoff on May 7.

Political analyst Philippe Alexandre said on RTL Radio that Mr. Chirac had turned Europe from a potential handicap into an advantage by seeking out the advice of pro-European centrists including former President Valery Giscard d'Estaing.

Mr. Jospin said in a television interview he would not vote in the second round if it was a choice between the two Gaullists, saying there was too little separating Mr. Chirac and Mr. Balladur.

Mr. Balladur, meanwhile, vowed he could still fight his way back despite a drastic

slide in the polls from a position of runaway front-runner.

"I have been favourite for many months," he told the conservative daily *Le Figaro*.

"The situation has been inverted for the past two weeks. It can turn around again. I will do everything to achieve that."

Europe had seemed likely to haunt the campaign. Voters approved the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 by a wafer-thin 51-49 per cent margin.

But the strongest potential supporters of European Union, including former European Commission President Jacques Delors, Mr. Giscard d'Estaing and former Prime Minister Raymond Barre, have decided not to stand, shifting debate to a more moderate trio.

Meanwhile Brice Lalonde, one of three ecology candidates in forthcoming elections for the French presidency, said Wednesday he was withdrawing from the race to reduce splits in the ecologist vote.

Mr. Lalonde, head of Generation Ecologie, said he had tried to persuade the two other green candidates Antoine Waechter and Dominique Voynet to step down, but had failed and was therefore withdrawing himself.

"Three candidates standing on the ecologist ticket would assassinate ecology and would put environmental problems in peril," he said in a statement issued to AFP.

On French Television he said: "I am withdrawing because the battle is so important, and it should not be weakened... I have been trying for three months to persuade them to withdraw, but unfortunately I have not been heard."

The other ecologist candidates in the presidential race are Waechter, head of the Independent Ecologist Movement, and Voynet, the French Greens' candidate.

Mr. Voynet, responding to Mr. Lalonde's announcement, said at an election rally Wednesday evening that his decision showed "a sense of responsibility and lucidity."

She added that she hoped Mr. Waechter would "do the same."

## Political turmoil grips Italy day after Dini win

ROME (R) — A lacerating split in the centrist Popular Party (PPI) brought fresh political turmoil to Italy Friday and put another question mark over Prime Minister Lamberto Dini's chances of survival.

It division into two camps, which some analysts believe could tip the balance of power in parliament against Mr. Dini, drove home the deep political uncertainty that helped send the lira skidding to yet another record low against the German mark.

The PPI, successor to the Christian Democrats who governed Italy for 50 years, has divided over leader Rocco Buttiglione's plan to forge a pact with Silvio Berlusconi's conservative Freedom Alliance for April regional elections.

Mr. Buttiglione's opponents on the left of the party elected their own leader, Gerardo Bianco, Thursday night.

They want to rally behind

Romano Prodi, a Catholic economist building a centrist pact to challenge former Prime Minister Berlusconi in a general election expected some time this year.

The small PPI has now solidly supported Mr. Dini and his stop-gap technocrat government, installed two months ago from outside the country's bung parliament.

Its 33 members of the Chamber of Deputies (lower house) voted en bloc for Mr. Dini Thursday in a confidence vote he survived by a narrow 315 votes to 309 on his emergency budget, one of the four pillars of his limited policy programme.

But some commentators believe pro-Buttiglione deputies in the PPI could side in any future confidence test with Mr. Berlusconi, whose conservative Freedom Alliance voted "no" to Mr. Dini in a bid to force a snap general election.

Political commentator Ste-

fanio Folli, writing in *Corriere della Sera* newspaper, said the confidence vote result bad shown parliament "split down the middle."

"The Freedom Alliance lost... if it's hard to say who won... if the nine or 10 pro-Buttiglione deputies... side with the right, the balance of power would be overturned, again by a handful of votes," Mr. Folli said.

"There's enough meat there to forecast a wretched life for the current parliament," he wrote.

Mr. Dini, treasury minister in the Berlusconi government that fell last December, survived in parliament thanks to a decision by some 17 deputies in the Marxist Party Communist Refoundation to back him against orders from their leadership.

With his mini-budget, designed to plug a hole in 1995 state finances, through the chamber, Mr. Dini must now crack the toughest nut on his agenda — reform to the cost

## Night time Russian airstrikes signal 'new stage'

ARGUN, Russia (AFP) — A series of night time airstrikes in Chechnya signal a "new stage" in Russian tactics along the front south of Grozny, a top Chechen commander said here Friday.

"During the day you can see what you are aiming at... Now they just want to bomb everything under the sun," Aslanbek Ismailov, commander of Chechen separatists defending the town of Argun told AFP.

"What other reason is there to bomb at night?" he added.

Asked how soon this would be, Mr. Adams said "within the next few weeks."

The announcement came a day after Mr. Adams shook hands with President Bill Clinton, the highlight so far of a high-profile visit during which Mr. Adams has received the full VIP treatment.

Russian bombs hit targets near Argun and Shali overnight, where Russian and Chechen forces are separated by the Argun River. The night time airstrikes began at this front Wednesday night.

Commander Ismailov said that there had been a precedent for night time bombing in the USA, but residents of Shali said that it was the first time that night time airstrikes occurred in their part of the front.

Chechen secessionist forces driven out of Grozny by the Russians now consider Shali as their capital.

So far, the night time strikes seem to have been concentrated on military positions, although unconfirmed reports said bombs had hit civilian targets at Gudermes.

Russian planes bombed civilian targets in a daytime raid on the village of Avturi earlier this week.

Chechen fighters holding a position outside Shali said that bombs were dropped in the field alongside the road leading into the town from the west, where fighting has raged since Monday.

Loud explosions coming from that area could be heard in Shali as planes flew overhead at 11:00 p.m. (2000 GMT) Thursday.

Commander Ismailov said that bombers struck Argun beginning at about 10:00 p.m. (1900 GMT) and again early Friday morning.

"This is not a sanctions policy. It is using our leverage to help the case of reform," one official said.

Russia's trade with the EU accounts for roughly three times its commerce with the United States, Japan and China combined.

of people Friday in the aftermath of crushing the alleged coup attempt.

Mr. Usibov said the rebels' base was "destroyed, dozens of people have been arrested, and the search has begun for those hiding," Interfax News Agency reported.

All those who fled "will eventually be found and arrested," Mr. Usibov said.

Mr. Aliyev said four government soldiers had been killed and an unspecified number of rebels and civilians caught in the cross fire.

Rasul Guliyev, speaker of the Azerbaijani parliament, said that "dozens of young people were killed and wounded."

Interior Minister Ramil Ahhassov ordered the OPON, whose total force comprises 3,000 men, to disband and Mr. Aliyev said the country was on the verge of civil war.

In the centre of Baku, a city of 2.5 million on the Caspian Sea, armed men manned roadblocks.

Mr. Javadov had met local journalists Thursday, one of whom told Reuters that Mr. Javadov was ready for compromise but would not drop demands for Mr. Aliyev to resign.

Mr. Aliyev is trying to bring stability to his country, which has been on the losing end of a war against ethnic Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh region and lies in the stormy Caucasus region.

Restoring calm became vital after Azerbaijan signed a \$7.4 billion deal with Western oil companies last year to develop rich oil fields in the Caspian Sea.

Last October, Mr. Aliyev declared a state of emergency after OPON police held Azerbaijan's prosecutor general hostage for several hours, Mr. Aliyev described the seizure then as an attempted coup and accused Mr. Javadov of being involved.

Azerbaijani authorities said they had arrested dozens

## Adams: Irish peace talks move closer

WASHINGTON (Agencies)

— Sinn Fein and the British government have moved a step closer to ministerial level talks with an agreement to discuss the agenda for such a meeting Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams said here Friday.

"I am pleased to announce we have moved to a discussion of the agenda for meetings between Sinn Fein and British ministers," Mr. Adams told a press conference.

"These meetings will take place sooner rather than later. This is my conviction," he added.

Asked how soon this would be, Mr. Adams said "within the next few weeks."

The announcement came a day after Mr. Adams shook hands with President Bill Clinton, the highlight so far of a high-profile visit during which Mr. Adams has received the full VIP treatment.

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"This is not a sanctions policy. It is using our leverage to help the case of reform," one official said.

Russia's trade with the EU accounts for roughly three times its commerce with the United States, Japan and China combined.

We consider this positive," a ministry spokesman said, adding that the government believed renewed contact by letter would enable the two sides to overcome remaining differences and restart peace talks.

Meanwhile, Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev warned Friday that the Kremlin was running out of money to finance the war in Chechnya but added that "military methods" to settle the war were not yet exhausted.

He gave no date for when

## Ukraine bans constitution in separatist Crimea

KIEV (R) — Ukraine's parliament abolished the constitution of its autonomous Crimean Peninsula Friday after President Leonid Kuchma urged members to take action against pro-Russian separatists.

Deputies voted 246 to 55 to outlaw a 1992 constitution which authorities in Kiev viewed as a bid to break away from post-Soviet Ukraine.

They also decided to launch criminal proceedings against Crimean President

Yuri Meshkov "in view of gross violations of Ukraine's constitution and laws." His job was abolished.

It was Ukraine's first major punitive action against Crimea in three years of trying to contain the drive by its ethnic Russian majority to move closer to Moscow. But deputies stopped short of abolishing Crimea's autonomous status or parliament.

The greatest disease of the latter part of the 20th century, separatism, is at the

fore of your actions," Mr. Kuchma said, gesturing to the chairman of the Crimean parliament sitting in the chamber.

"If Ukraine's parliament and president continue to take no action, there could be unpredictable events.... we are witnesses to events in the former Soviet Union which occurred because no one took timely action."

Mr. Kuchma was referring to unrest and constitutional disputes which have scarred former Soviet republics, the two latest examples being Russia's campaign to quash a separatist revolt in Chechnya and President Nursultan Nazarbayev's dissolution of parliament in Kazakhstan.

Two-thirds of Crimea's 2.7 million residents are ethnic Russians and since the collapse of the former Soviet Union, many politicians have done little to conceal their aim of restoring Russian rule over the Peninsula.

head off renewed fighting in the Balkans, French officials endorsed by the five-power contact group, if a new war is to be averted when a four-month ceasefire in Bosnia expires at the end of April.

French Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher next week, when there could be a ministerial meeting of the contact group, diplomats said.

The EU ministers will also discuss approving a trade deal as an incentive to persuade Croatia to extend the U.N. Protection Force's mandate on its soil. President Franjo Tudjman has resisted a decision to expel the U.N. peacekeepers after the mandate's expiry at the end of March until a new one is forged.

This is not a sanctions policy. It is using our leverage to help the case of reform," one official said.

Russia's trade with the EU accounts for roughly three times its commerce with the United States, Japan and China combined.

First on the agenda will be efforts led by France, current holder of the EU's rotating presidency, to stage a last-ditch summit of the leaders of Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia to

## Azerbaijani troops crush 'coup-plot' police revolt

BAKU (Agencies) — Troops in Azerbaijan Friday crushed a coup attempt by rebel police units aimed at seizing and killing President Haydar Aliyev, the government said.

Deputy Interior Minister Rovshan Javadov, who led the mutiny, was killed in a battle when troops attacked hundreds of insurgents police, Azerbaijanis said.

Mr. Aliyev, 71, a former Soviet politician member who has been in power since June 1993, said in a sombre address to the nation: "There are numerous casualties on both sides."

National Security Minister Namig Ahhassov told a cabinet meeting that Mr. Javadov had plotted a coup because he wanted to be interior minister of the Transcaucasian state, the third biggest oil producer of the former Soviet Republics.

"They planned to seize the president and kill him," Mr. Ahhassov said.

Defence Minister Safar Aliyev said government soldiers attacked the headquarters of the rebel

# Opinion & Analysis

JORDAN TIMES, SATURDAY, MARCH 18, 1995

## Jordan Times

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### For the sake of the ecosystem

**THE CONFLICT** between Canada and the European Union over Spain's fishing rights in international waters off Canada's Newfoundland's coast has implications for other countries with or without fishing fleets. At issue is the present lacuna in international law about the regime that should govern not only fishing but other practices in high seas. The Law of the Sea Convention that was negotiated and adopted more than 15 years ago left much of the activities in international waters unregulated. In effect the law of the jungle applies in greater portions of the earth's surface with countries practically free to fish as they want leading damages to the sea's ecosystem. This hiatus in international law has led to the present standoff between Europe and Canada with increasing prospects that the tension could escalate into an armed conflict.

Canada uses a moral argument in defence of its position. It says it wants to save a threatened fish species, halibut, from extinction. It maintains that other fish species had become extinct because of over fishing. Spain on the other hand rests its case on international law that makes Canadian actions unjustified. Canada's position would have been stronger of course had it resorted in the first place to a diplomatic solution rather than arrest the Spanish trawler. Likewise Spain and the EU should have shown more sensitivity to Canadian concerns. Spain and the EU need to defer their legal position in favour of the endangered fish and the ecosystem. The international community should meanwhile move to address the existing loopholes in the law of the sea by legislating on how international waters can be sensibly used.

### ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily on Friday addressed Jordanian-Egyptian relations and the Kingdom's endeavours to improve inter-Arab relations. It said in an editorial that the Jordanian-Egyptian economic and political relations are important not only because they give other Arab countries a good example to follow, but also because both countries are leading peace efforts in the region at a time when the Arab World is facing grave challenges. It said the leadership of the two countries were, therefore, keen to preserve the pan-Arab identity within a framework of full partnership aiming to build a better future for the region. What should be emphasised here is that Jordan is seeking to activate bilateral agreements with Egypt and to propose new cooperation agreements out of the Kingdom's keenness to achieve Arab solidarity because the existing challenges threatening all parts of the Arab World require joint Arab action, the paper said. This is why His Majesty King Hussein voiced his support for the steadfast people of occupied South Lebanon (donating JD 50,000) and why Jordan supports in its stand on the need to rid the region of all mass destruction weapons, it said. This is also the case in Jordan's support for the Palestinians' quest to regain their full rights on their national soil, it added. The paper concluded by expressing hope that the Jordanian-Egyptian relations would open new scopes for returning inter-Arab relations to normality and achieve Arab dreams of pan-Arab unity.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour daily on Friday called on the Arab countries to extend every possible support to the people of the Israeli-occupied South Lebanon. Mohammad Ka'ash said if Israel really wants peace, it must know that peace is indivisible. He said if Israel wants also peace based on justice, justice also is indivisible. If the Arab status quo led to the absence of Arab coordination at this stage and consequently led to the Arab states' inability to take a unified stand during the peace negotiations, then the rulers of Israel should know that there can be no stability nor security without having a comprehensive peace at all fronts, he said. Israel should be reminded of these facts as it continues its terrorist acts in South Lebanon and continues to attack Lebanese villages, cities and refugee camps, said the writer.

### Jordanian Perspective

By Dr. Musa Keilani

## Peace must allow Palestinians total economic freedom

THE RECENT visit of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to the Middle East was a watershed for most optimists to it that reinvigorated the Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Palestinian tracks of peace negotiations and assured Jordan of continued American commitment to help the Kingdom meet its economic and military needs.

Notwithstanding the uncertainty that prevailed at the time of the Christopher visit over American debt write-off to Jordan, subsequent developments in the U.S. Congress indicate strongly that the Clinton administration is indeed living up to its pledge to the Kingdom. Beyond the expected debt relief to Jordan is, however, the question of the Kingdom's need for direct economic and military assistance from the United States. Hopefully this will be tackled during the late March visit to the U.S. by His Majesty King Hussein.

In the political context, one key message that Jordan gave to Mr. Christopher during his brief stopover in Amman in between Israel and Syria was that the Palestinian track should not be allowed to suffer and stagnate at any cost.

The key to the entire Middle East conflict is indeed a just and durable solution to the Palestinian conflict and unless it is reached then one can hardly say that peace has been restored to the region. There may be a million different interpretations to the moves undertaken by the different players in the Middle East peace process, but the importance of the Palestinian track is overriding everything else.

Hopefully, Mr. Christopher understood the vital importance of advancing the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations and reaffirmed it to the Israeli leaders he met during the mission. We look forward to seeing translation of his message and Israeli realisation of the importance of the message into reality soon.

In this context, however, there are signs that Israel is still holding onto some of its demands in negotiations with the Palestinians. Indeed, the accord reached by Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat, who heads the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in Gaza and Jericho, and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres to set a July 1 deadline for reaching agreement on Israeli army deployment in the West Bank is very welcome. But reaching an agreement to reach an agreement is no answer to the continued suffering of the Palestinian people under occupation. The moves undertaken by Israel to

increase slightly the number of Palestinians allowed to enter the Jewish state are not simply enough. On the contrary, Israel should relax its iron grip on the economy of the Palestinians by allowing closer interaction between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip on the one hand and Arab countries on the other.

The policy followed by Israel so far clearly indicates that the Jewish state does not entertain any plans to allow significant Palestinian-Arab interaction except of course for direct Arab economic contribution to the Palestinians.

That in itself is a non-starter. By hindering the Palestinians through the Paris economic cooperation agreement signed in April, Israel is continuing to keep the Palestinian market closed to others. This naturally restrains the Palestinians' options of developing their own industry and doing what they could in terms of exports to Arab countries.

In this era of the so-called new world order, no Arab country is willing to shell out millions of dollars in aid to the Palestinians. At this transitional stage, however, there is a strong possibility that many of them would look favourably upon trade and economic ties with the Palestinians to make up for the lack of Arab aid for them. But the situation is very fluid and today's readiness to accept to deal with the Palestinians in business may not be very fresh tomorrow. And this does not bode well for the much-heralded Palestinian economic development.

There is little substance in Israel's argument that opening up the Palestinian market means seepage of non-Palestinian goods into the Israeli market. By definition, the policy of "separation" from the Palestinians that is under way in Israel means blocking Palestinians entering the Jewish state. But the same token, there is little to prevent Israel from controlling the entry of goods into its territory.

All said and done, there are many urgent measures that Israel should introduce to continue to keep the peace process alive and kicking and in the meantime also ensure that the process would lead to just peace that entails a better standard of living for the Palestinians. If that component is missing, especially as a result of Israel's self-oriented policies, then just and fair peace would not have any meaning.

We strongly hope that U.S. Middle East coordinator Dennis Ross, who is expected in the region soon, will not confine himself to the Syrian-Israeli track, but will also seek to advance the Palestinian-Israeli track against the realities of the requirements of a just peace.



## Will Israel choose apartheid or peace?

The following article appeared as an editorial in the March 3 issue at Middle East International.

THE GOVERNMENT of the United States favours the practice of apartheid in Israel, true or false? An experienced observer, writing in the *Christian Science Monitor*, recently addressed this question:

Why is the Clinton administration giving generous support to a foreign government that is implementing, in its major city, the grossest forms of discrimination on the basis of religion and ethnicity?

Whatever the reason, the facts are there for all to see in the settlements which the Israeli government is hastily extending in East Jerusalem and which are designed to be exclusively occupied by Jews. And the writer remarked that Americans would be shocked to be told

that housing developments in any American city were "off limits" to Jews, in the way that these Israeli settlements are closed to the indigenous Muslim and Christian citizens of Jerusalem.

But these settlements are not merely off limits to the Palestinians; the express purpose behind their construction is to turn the Palestinians into a minority in their own city and, eventually, to pressure them into leaving it altogether. Israel's colonisation of the refugee camps all round Israel's borders. Its aim is the enforcement of Israeli control over the whole of Palestine, with no nonsense about equal rights for all its inhabitants. It is a policy which could not succeed against the tide of international opinion but for the lavish political and economic support provided by the government and people of the United States.

This policy, with its American backing, is not just a question of morality or human rights; it lies at the heart of the struggle over the future of Palestine, whose outcome will determine the fate of millions of Jews and Arabs for years to come. And the outcome must be one of two alternatives. If Israel succeeds in swallowing all of Palestine and denying the Palestinians their independence, Israel's status as a society based on racial discrimination will be confirmed. The Palestinians will not submit voluntarily to being forcibly absorbed into an alien community whose very *raison d'être* is its insistence on being exclusive. The Israelis, unless they abandon Zionism, cannot do other than practice apartheid between the "chosen" and the rest; and so four or five million Israeli Jews will continue to impose their dominion on one or two

million Palestinian Arabs — not to mention those other unhappy and resentful millions in the Palestinian diaspora.

And the second alternative? If Israel fails to secure the whole Palestine and gives up the ambition to dominate the Palestinians, it would still have difficulty in pacifying the enemies of peace, meaning Israel's own fanatics among the settlers and those Palestinians whom they have goaded into armed resistance. But there would be a common interest among all the rest on both sides to bury the hatchet, as whites and blacks have done in South Africa, and to taste the forgotten fruits of peace.

Can anyone persuade Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin that the second pattern is worth trying for? It means, in moral terms, a change of heart, and that's not easy for a man of Mr. Rabin's stamp.

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This comment was adapted for the International Herald Tribune from the current issue of Foreign Affairs.

## Writers association ignoring real issues, focusing on slogans

By Sa'eda Kilani

JORDANIAN COLUMNISTS focused this week on domestic issues, particularly elections in the various associations, unions, leagues and organisations in the Kingdom.

Many writers addressed the resignation of Mu'min Razzaz as president of the Jordanian Writers Association (JWA). Columnists were concerned, not only with JWA's future and conflicts within the association, but also with what is known as the dispute over the "normalisation" of ties with Israel.

Some writers voiced their dismay at the successive events that led to Mr. Razzaz's resignation on March 9, saying these events are constant crises that hit the Jordanian society in all domains and in all unions. Mr. Razzaz's resignation, Al Ra'i cultural editor Basel Rafai'eh said, can only be considered as a

strong reflection of the crisis, that all ordinary and extraordinary meetings of the association have failed to contain.

Any one who thinks that the solution to these crises lies in the resignation of administrative committees is mistaken, Mr. Rafai'eh said. There is a dire need to look into the roots of the problem instead of creating problems out of nothing, he said.

Fakhri Saleh, a columnist at Al Dustour, examined the problem from the cultural perspective and mainly focused on the association's lack of research and achievements. He said the association is devolving into a futile debate over slogans while cultural issues have been neglected. The association, Mr. Saleh said, has not issued its magazine for a whole year nor has it organised any significant and specialised seminars since 1992.

Columnists had a more

critical approach and showed mixed reactions to the elections of the Bar Association in light of decision taken by the justice minister, Hisham Al Tel, to ban West Bank lawyers from taking part in the elections.

The decision by Mr. Al Tel is perfectly correct, constitutionally, legally and

terms of context as much as in terms of timing. The Kingdom's decision to sever ties with the West Bank was taken in 1988 and several elections had been held since then without interference from the government.

Al Ra'i columnist Fahed Al Fanek dismissed all arguments for or against

registered in the association for financial reasons. They serve as reserved votes in the hands of certain groups which try to infiltrate the country.

Columnists also talked about a wide variety of subjects, among which were the International Women's Day, UNRWA's services in Jordan and Israeli tourism in the country.

Israelis should respect the Arab and Islamic culture, he said. They should respect our traditions and put aside all their illusions and fantasies they have of Arabs and the Arab World.

Mr. Yasser Za'atreh, a columnist in Al Dustour, said that all the rumours and talks about the reductions of UNRWA's services in Jordan are basically due to the organisation's lack of interest in the employee's concerns. What is needed, he said, is a more civilised treatment of employees. The government should try to push the organisation to better treat its employees since they are Jordan's citizens, first and foremost.

Politically, Abdullah Radwan from Al Ra'i newspaper said. How can the same person have the same political rights in two countries, and how can we demand the full independence of the Palestinian state. He said that all the points that columnists and writers have been debating since the minister's decision was issued are baseless. The most important element in the issue as a whole is, according to Dr. Fanek, that there are 236 graduates who have not practised their profession, but in

## Why NATO should be expanded

The writer is U.S. assistant secretary of state for European and Canadian affairs.

By Richard C. Holbrooke

WASHINGTON — President Bill Clinton's four trips to Europe last year underline an inescapable fact: The United States has become a European power in a sense that goes beyond traditional assertions of America's "commitment" of Europe. In the 21st century, Europe will still need the active American involvement that has been a necessary component of the continental balance for half a century. Conversely, an unstable Europe would still threaten essential national security interests of the United States. This is as true after the cold war as it was during it.

I do not intend to suggest that nothing has changed.

Local conflicts, internal political and economic instability, and the return of historical grievances have replaced Soviet expansionism as the greatest threat to peace in Europe.

Western Europe and America must jointly ensure that tolerant democracies become rooted throughout Europe and that angry legacies of the past are contained and solved.

The emotional but also practical lure of the West can be the strongest unifying force. Europe has seen in generations, if the opportunity is not squandered.

The tragedy of Bosnia does not diminish the responsibility to build a new security architecture.

As the greatest collective security failure of the West since the 1930s, it only underscores the urgency of that task.

The central security pillar of the new architecture is NATO.

Expansion of NATO is a logical and essential consequence of the disappearance of the Iron Curtain and the need to widen European unity based on shared democratic values.

NATO has embarked on a two-phase programme for 1995. During the first part of this year, NATO is determining through an internal discussion the rationale and process for expanding the new, post-cold war NATO.

In the months prior to the December 1995 ministerial meeting, NATO's views will be presented individually to members of the Partnership for Peace.

During the first such detailed discussions on the subject to take place outside the alliance.

In December, NATO ministers will review the results of these discussions before deciding how to proceed.

Several key points should be stressed:

• NATO expansion must strengthen security in the entire region, including nations that are not members.

• The rationale and process for NATO's expansion will be transparent, not secret.

• There is no timetable or list of nations that will be invited to join NATO.

These will emerge as the process moves forward.

• Each nation will be considered individually, not as part of some grouping.

• No outside nation will exercise a veto.

• As was the case in the original Washington treaty, new members must be democratic, have market economies, be committed to responsible security policies and be able to contribute to the alliance.

As president Clinton has stated, "countries with repressive political systems, countries with designs on their neighbours, countries with militaries unchecked by civilian control or with closed economic systems need not apply."

Each new NATO member constitutes for the United States the most solemn of commitments: a bilateral defence treaty that extends the U.S. security umbrella to a new nation. This requires ratification by two-thirds of the U.S. Senate, a point that is often overlooked.

NATO expansion cannot occur in a vacuum. If it did, it would encourage the very instabilities it was seeking to avoid.



# Economy

JORDAN TIMES, SATURDAY, MARCH 18, 1995

## Saudi Arabia issues bonds against debts to contractors

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia has issued special bonds to local and foreign contractors and suppliers to clear part of the billions of dollars in arrears, bankers said.

They said the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (SAMA), the kingdom's central bank, was issuing bonds through the banks to a total of 120 contractors.

"We received on Tuesday a notification of some bonds issued to us on behalf of contractors," one bank manager said.

The bankers said the total value of the issued bonds was around five billion Saudi riyals (\$1.3 billion), which is 26 per cent of the estimated \$5 billion total debt to contractors.

Bankers and diplomats said the government had already made some payments in cash to some contractors this year, but it was not clear how much.

They said the bonds, with an issue date of March 15.

would have varying maturities, with redemption on March 31, 1996, September 30, 1996, March 31, 1996 or September 30, 1997.

The nominal value of the bonds was not clear, they said.

"The bonds will be for individual amounts," one banker said.

"There are no papers. They are being issued in the same format that they issue Saudi government development bonds which is an electronic bookkeeping entry," he said.

"The bonds carry a fixed coupon payable by the Saudi government semi-annually at either 6 1/2 per cent or 7 1/4 per cent."

The bankers said foreign contractors would also receive the bonds, a significant step in the kingdom where foreigners are excluded from buying government bonds.

"Foreign contractors are included. There have been limited cases where non-Saudis have had bonds be-

fore, but that was very very limited," one said.

The bankers said the Saudi government would not have been able to come up with the cash easily while it is trying to balance its budget and avoid falling further behind.

Saudi Arabia is many months behind in payments to some contractors, causing painful cash crunches and worries for some foreign workers, including doctors and nurses.

To some companies the government was only up to date until mid-1993 and to others possibly not even that recently, the bankers said.

Saudi Arabia had a fledgling capital market in which little trade takes place in development bonds. Banks tend to hold them until their two-to-five year maturities.

The bankers said contractors can either hold on to the bonds until they mature or negotiate to sell them to the banks if they need cash im-

mediately.

They said that although the issued bonds would not cover the total government debt to contractors, it was still a clear message by the government that it will stand by its promises.

The government had said in January when it issued its 1995 budget that it planned to start paying back its debt to contractors and King Fahd had issued directions for implementing that.

The government is saying we are sticking by our word and paying back," one banker said. "This will generate more confidence in the Saudi economy and fiscal policies."

"They (contractors) may not be happy in terms of not getting cash now. The sort of companies that might find it difficult are sub-contractors and suppliers who don't have direct contracts with the government and companies involved in services and maintenance," one banker said.

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"Foreign contractors are included. There have been limited cases where non-Saudis have had bonds be-

## Iran steps up subsidies in '95-'96 budget

TEHRAN (AFP) — The Iranian parliament has adopted a budget for the next financial year marked by a large increase in subsidies for basic foods as the country battles an economic and social crisis.

The balanced budget of 96,100 billion riyals is 30 per cent larger than the 1994-95 budget, reflecting the plunge in value of the national currency over the last year.

At official exchange rates the country's general budget is \$55 billion and the state budget is \$26.5 billion.

Unlike previous years members of parliament made only minor adjustments to the government's spending plans which were considered realistic.

The March 1995-1996

budget sets out a 50 per cent rise in government subsidies for basic foods from \$850 million to \$1.25 billion.

Another \$420 million were earmarked for the import of subsidised pharmaceutical products.

The rial's collapse has triggered sharp inflation on most consumer products, prompting popular discontent. The central bank has put the inflation figure for last year at 50 per cent, but it is higher according to independent estimates.

The steep rise in subsidies will be partially offset by the doubling of Iranian oil products, which are among the cheapest in the world, and a large increase in services.

The government also fore-

casts a \$1 billion increase in its oil revenue to \$13.65 billion. Its figures are based on exports of 2.49 million barrels of oil a day at \$15 a barrel.

The oil ministry won parliament's go-ahead to raise directly \$1.2 billion in duties to finance oil, gas and petrochemical development projects, against the advice of the government which wanted to centralise taxation.

The budget sets aside \$1.6 billion to reduce Iran's external debts of \$36 billion which are at the root of the country's two-year financial crisis.

The central bank has been able to reschedule about \$1.5 billion in arrears, but the country has to pay creditors between \$6 to \$8 billion a

year over the next five years.

The government also announced plans to cut the number of state and public officials.

Parliament tightened its control of all foreign currency expenditure by ministries, state companies and semi-official organisations benefiting from the official exchange rate which is 60 per cent lower than rates on the open market.

Members of parliament discussed the country's defence budget in a closed-door session and no figures were published.

Meanwhile most investment was devoted to oil, gas and petrochemical projects as well as transport and electricity.

In line with Mr. Mandela's promise to address apartheid backlogs in housing, health care, education and employment, be allocated five billion rand (\$1.4 billion) to the second year of the government's flagship reconstruction and development programme (RDP).

Apart from the RDP allocation, be increased the share of state expenditure allocated directly to police, housing, education, health and social welfare and set aside 2.5 billion rand (\$695 million) to narrow the wage gap between black and white civil servants.

Defence spending was slashed by about 15 per cent in real terms to 10.5 billion rand (\$2.9 billion) despite a last-minute cabinet decision to restate 700 million (\$195 million) of the amount originally cut.

Banking largely on economic growth of at least 2.75 per cent in fiscal 1995/96 to drive up revenue, Mr. Liebenberg abolished punitive separate tax rates for single people and married women and introduced a uniform rate for all earners.

The two billion rand (\$555 million) cost of the parity measure imposed under an equality clause in South Africa's post-apartheid bill of rights was balanced by a two percentage point increase in the maximum marginal tax rate to 45 per cent for people earning over 80,000 rand a year.

Mr. Liebenberg also hiked the state levy on petrol sales

## Arab Gulf states slash spending by over 40 per cent since Kuwait war

ABU DHABI (AFP) —

Arab Gulf states have slashed spending by more than 40 per cent since the 1991 Gulf war as they continued to feel the pinch of low oil prices and their eroding overseas investments, a Gulf bank manager said.

Most of the spending cuts were in Saudi Arabia, which no longer can meet growing defence and development needs due to the weak crude oil prices, its commitment to creditors and a sharp decline in its reserve abroad.

Figures compiled from the Abu Dhabi-based Arab Monetary Fund and central banks in the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states showed they spent more than \$124 billion in 1991, the highest level in nearly 10 years.

Bankers said the high expenditure was due to cash contributions of nearly \$65 billion to finance a U.S.-led international coalition that ejected Iraqi forces from neighbouring Kuwait in February 1991.

Actual spending was gradually cut in the following years to reach around \$99 billion in 1992 and \$82 billion

in 1993.

Expenditure was projected at around \$72 billion while it is expected to go below \$70 billion in 1995. This is because Saudi Arabia again trimmed spending and Kuwait is planning a tight budget to reduce the deficit.

"GCC expenditure is projected to be between \$65 billion and \$70 billion in 1995. This means that the combined expenditure has been slashed by nearly 43 per cent since 1991," a Gulf bank manager told AFP.

The largest spending cut was made by Saudi Arabia in 1994, when it unveiled a \$42 billion budget lower by 20 than the 1993 spending of \$52.5 billion. In 1995, it again cut spending by around six per cent to \$40 billion to slash the deficit to \$4 billion from \$10 billion.

Saudi Arabia's spending reached one of its biggest levels in 1991, when it stood at \$73.3 billion while Kuwait spent a record \$26.3 billion. Bahrain, Oman and Qatar also spent more in 1991 but cut expenditure later.

The other GCC member,

the United Arab Emirates

(UAE), is the only exception, as federal spending has remained almost unchanged in the past years. Bankers attributed this to the fact there was no real deficit as each of the country's seven emirates contributes half its income to the federal budget.

Spending cuts have sharply slowed down the GCC economies but most of them still record positive growth rates due to a surge in the private sector.

"The private sector will likely play a key role in the coming years as regional governments are on the verge of launching sweeping reforms to open new opportunities for that sector," a Gulf banker said. "They are prompted by the fact that oil prices will not see major improvements in the near future."

GCC oil revenues declined to \$74 billion in 1993 from \$77 billion in 1992 and could drop by nearly five per cent in 1994. This compares with more than \$180 billion in 1980, when oil prices topped \$30 a barrel, nearly double their current level.

their overseas reserves. Saudi Arabia is believed to have drained more than half its reserves of \$120 billion while Kuwait, which had also financed post-war rebuilding, sold over 60 per cent of its pre-invasion investment of around \$100 billion.

Spending cuts have sharply lowered the GCC economies but most of them still record positive growth rates due to a surge in the private sector.

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## South African budget shifts spending towards blacks

CAPE TOWN (R) — President Nelson Mandela's government has presented its budget to parliament pur-

suing South Africa's post-apartheid spending shift towards poor blacks and trying to attract investors.

"We've tried to create a budget that is economically sound and politically responsible," Finance Minister Chris Liebenberg told reporters before he presented the country's first budget crafted fully by a democratic government.

"This country's copybook political transformation must be matched by an equally impressive economic restructuring. The challenge the government faces is to manage its budget in a way that promotes real economic growth. This will increase the

resources available to attain the objectives of the reconstruction and development programme," he said.

Mr. Liebenberg, who took over from former mining magnate Derek Keys last September, increased spending for the fiscal year beginning on April 1 by an inflation-matching 9.5 per cent to 153.3 billion rand (\$42.9 billion).

In view of our commitment to reducing the budget deficit and in the context of the economic recovery in progress, the government has decided to budget for a deficit of about 29.1 billion rand (\$8.2 billion), or 5.8 per cent of the estimated GDP," he told parliament.

This compares with a deficit that equalled 6.4 per cent of 1994/95 gross domestic product in a comparable basis.

It's spring! Let's dance to the music that's playing in our hearts!

Sorry—my heart is tuned to an all-talk station right now.

mark. The two currencies stood in late afternoon at 92.82 pesetas to the mark and 1,233 lire, compared with 1,214.3 Thursday evening in London.

Sterling joined in the downturn, plummeting to an all-time low of 2,1870 marks, while the French franc was off to 3.58 francs to the mark, close to its record low of 3.59 reached last week.

Traders said the mark's new uptick got underway in the morning against the lira on rumours that it would be forced out of the European Monetary System (EMS) over the weekend.

The mark's new display of muscles forced the Bank of Spain and the Bank of Italy to intervene to defend the peseta and the lira, which fell to record lows during the session of 93.30 pesetas to the mark and 1,275.5 lire to the

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## Greek clubs join Real, Limoges in semis CSKA finish match with only 3 players

PIRAEUS, Greece (Agencies) — Olympiakos Piraeus beat CSKA Moscow 79-45 (37-32) Thursday and became the second Greek club to advance to the final-four of the European Basketball Championship in Spain next month.

Earlier Thursday, Panathinaikos Athens trounced buckler Bologna 99-56 to gain a berth in the final-four in Zaragoza, scheduled for 11-13 April.

### Stoichkov sent away for 2 weeks

BARCELONA (AFP) — Barcelona's volatile striker Hristo Stoichkov has been told to take a 15-day holiday in an increasingly bitter row with coach Johan Cruyff.

The club have also started disciplinary proceedings against the European Footballer of the Year, after critical comments he allegedly made about his teammates, and his days here could now be numbered.

Stoichkov says he is ready to quit the Spanish champions because of Cruyff, while teammates are furious with the Bulgarian international for his comments.

The bitterness started soon after Paris St. Germain knocked Barcelona out of the European Champions Cup quarter-finals in Paris on Wednesday night.

Thursday morning's Spanish press carried comments allegedly made by Stoichkov to Bulgarian daily Standart.

Stoichkov supposedly accused Cruyff of wanting his son Jordi and nephew Mariano Angoy in the first team so they could earn appearance bonuses, while the Bulgarian rated Jordi's footballing abilities as limited.

He reportedly went on to say that Barcelona would lose to a Bulgarian second division side were it not for him, Dutch defender Ronald Koeman and midfielder Jose Maria Bakero being in the side.

The reports immediately caused a furor in the Barcelona squad.

Koeman said: "If it's true he said all that, he doesn't deserve the confidence of his teammates, he no longer has a place in the team.

Gifted midfielder Josep Guardiola added: "We're

perhaps not all as good as Stoichkov, but at least we respect the team spirit, and we are not as rude as this. He comments have betrayed the side."

Striker Aitor Beristain said: "The team might now turn its back on Stoichkov. He's broken the most basic rule of teamwork."

Stoichkov has since challenged the story, but Cruyff announced on Friday that it was time to take action.

### EUROPEAN BASKETBALL

Real Madrid of Spain and France's Limoges are the other two clubs with will join Panathinaikos and Olympiakos in the final-four.

The Russian coach Stanislav Eremin used only five players in the match because the other five were hospitalized with food poisoning.

In the 5th minute of the 2nd half CSKA played with

four players as Vasili Karasev was expelled with five fouls. Five minutes before the end of the game, Alexei Vandev also left the field with five fouls and the Russians

This is the second time in a row that the two Greek clubs participate in a final-four competition. Last season, Olympiakos and Panathinaikos finished 2nd and 3rd

The Spanish side fought back after the Croatians led for much of the first half and edged 43-40 ahead by the interval.

Backed by an enthusiastic home crowd, Madrid gained control in the second half to register a comfortable win with Joe Arlanas notching 29 points and Arvidas Sabonis 22.

The Spaniards won the first leg 82-78.

finished the match with only three players. Olympiakos' coach Yiannis Ioannidis, from his part, also reduced the number of his team's players to three.

respectively in the final-four, held in Israel.

Real Madrid won through to the final four by beating Croatia's Cibona Zagreb 82-70.

Andre Agassi



### Agassi's pursuit of Sampras continues

KEY BISCAYNE, Florida (AP) — The battle for the top spot in men's tennis heats up over the next 10 days as Andre Agassi's pursuit of Pete Sampras highlights the \$4.1 million Lipton Championships beginning on Friday.

Sampras will be looking for his third consecutive Lipton title, but his current 79-week stint as the number one player in the world has never seemed more tenuous with Agassi playing the best tennis of his life.

Sampras beat Agassi in the Indian Wells final on Monday to maintain his ranking edge, but their recent encounters have left the Wimbledon champion with a healthy respect for the man breathing down his neck.

"Andre, in my mind, is the one guy that I feel, even if I play well, he can still beat me," said Sampras, who lost the Australian Open final to Agassi in January in their other compelling 1995 meeting.

Sampras, who holds an 8-6 career edge over Agassi, will retain his number one status by reaching the semifinals, according to ATP officials. If Sampras stumbles before the final four, Agassi can over-

take his former Davis Cup teammate.

Making Sampras' task all the more difficult is his placement what is clearly the tougher half of the draw. He faces potential quarter-final challenges from the likes of former number one Jim Courier, the seventh seed, or 10th-seeded Ukrainian Andrei Medvedev.

Others who could get in the way of a successful title defense by Sampras include third seed Michael Chang, fifth-seeded German Michael Stich and another former number one, Stefan Edberg.

Even though Agassi can walk away from the tournament as the top ranked player in the world, the U.S. and Australian Open champion is looking farther down the road.

"I want to be number one at the end of the year," said Agassi, whose number two ranking is a career high.

"I don't want to just slide into number one. I want to play the best tennis over the course of this year."

So far he has, with defeats extremely rare since his stirring U.S. Open victory last September.

Agassi's road to another showdown with Sampras

appears less demanding with his toughest potential quarter-final threats coming from eighth seed Wayne Ferreira of South Africa or ninth-seeded American Todd Martin.

None of the big names will see action on the first day however, with all seeds receiving first-round byes.

Although tournament officials say it is "highly unlikely," that Steffi Graf can regain her number one ranking from Arantxa Sanchez Vicario at Lipton, the German star can certainly narrow the gap if not close it altogether.

Graf, the defending champion and three-time winner

of the women's title, has the likes of sixth seed Natasha Zvereva of Belarus, third-seeded Czech Jana Novotna and eighth-seeded fellow German Anke Huber in her half of the draw.

The top-seeded Spaniard has also enjoyed her share of success in Lipton's outdoor hardcourts. Sanchez won the tournament in 1992 and 1993.

Those looking to keep Sanchez from a clash with Graf in the final include fourth-seeded Americans Lindsay Davenport, 1989 champion Gabriela Sabatini, Kimiko Date of Japan and rejuvenated American Mary Joe Fernandez.

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### Arsenal miss Chelsea, draw Sampdoria

GENEVA (AFP) — Arsenal will defend their European Cup Winners' Cup title against Sampdoria in the semi-final after being kept apart from London neighbours Chelsea, who got Real Zaragoza, in Friday's draw here.

Fireworks can meanwhile

be expected in the UEFA Cup after the draw pitched both the current league leaders in Italy and Germany — Juventus and Borussia Dortmund — against each other.

The other semi-final is another Italian-German affair, with Parma taking on Bayer Leverkusen.

The European Champions Cup fixtures were already known but Friday's draw decided who will start at home.

Bayern Munich begin in the Olympic stadium against Ajax Amsterdam, while Paris St. Germain start at home to title holders AC Milan.

All the European Cup matches will be played next month.

But there were sighs of relief all over London on Friday, after their two sides were kept apart, raising English hopes of a dream final Cup Winners' Cup final between Arsenal and Chelsea.

If that happened, the May 10 venue will be switched from the Parc des Princes in Paris to Wembley.

Arsenal battled their way into the semi-final, against the odds, by beating Auxerre 1-0

in Burgundy on Thursday night for a 2-1 aggregate win.

After his stunning left-foot

topped the French, Arsenal striker Ian Wright will now be looking to break the club's European goalscoring record, set at 11 by John Radford.

Dortmund knocked out another Italian club, Lazio, in the quarter-finals, while Juventus were convincing 4-1 winners over another German club, Eintracht Frankfurt.

The ties will be played on April 4 and April 18.

Friday's Champions Cup draw must make AC Milan even more likely to retain their title, having the crucial

### EUROPEAN DRAWS

shoot-out 5-3.

However, Sampdoria will be without England captain David Platt, who was sent off just before the end of extra time for a professional foul.

Platt, who misses both meetings against Arsenal, brought down Porto mid-fielder Latapy with a lunging tackle as he headed for goal.

In the UEFA Cup, Borussia Dortmund will also be without one of their stars, Swiss goal acitve Stephan Chauvin.

"We'll have to get a result at home and then aim to hold on over there."

Ajax are meanwhile favourites to meet Milan in the final to be held in Vienna on May 24.

### SPORTS IN BRIEF

#### Finland wins gold in team jump

THUNDER BAY, Canada (AFP) — A thrilling final jump by Mika Lahtinen gave Finland the gold medal in the team 120-metre ski jump at the Nordic World Championships here Thursday. Lahtinen was the last jumper of the day and in both rounds he lifted his team to the lead. The Finns Ari-Pekka Nikkola, Jani Soininen, Janne Ahonen and Lahtinen totalled 889 points. Silver went to the German quartet of Hansjoerg Jake, Dieter Thomas, Gerd Siegmund and Jens Weissflog with 882.5 points.

#### Chinese athletes to stay in army barracks

BORAS, Sweden (AFP) — The Chinese team competing at the Athletics World Championships in Gothenburg August 4-11 has turned down hotel accommodations for the event in favour of army barracks, organisers said. The 30-member Chinese delegation, including athletes, coaches and officials, will stay in barracks in Boras, 50 kilometres (30 miles) southwest of Gothenburg in order to promote a "team feeling," organisers said.

#### Mansell misses first 2 races

LONDON (AP) — Former world champion driver Nigel Mansell will miss the first two races of the Formula One season because the cockpit of his new McLaren car is too small. McLaren made the announcement Friday saying Mansell could not achieve a comfortable driving position in the car. The team said a new chassis would be developed for Mansell and that another British driver, Mark Blundell, would replace him in the first two races. Mansell, winner of the Formula One championship in 1992 and the Indy Car title in 1993, flew home from testing in Portugal last week after complaining that the cockpit was too cramped for his 5-foot-10 (1.7 m), 167-pound (75 kg) frame. The 41-year-old Mansell will miss both the Brazilian Grand Prix March 26 and the Argentine race April 9.

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# Sports

## Spain ready to host '97 World Athletics Championship

MADRID (Agencies) — Spain's athletics chiefs announced Friday they are ready to stage the 1997 World Championships following Mexico's late withdrawal.

Spanish cities interested in staging the event have until May 5 to put together a bid to be examined by the national federation.

Madrid has already declared it is interested while Seville, which had been targeting the 1999 championships, and Barcelona, the 1992 Olympics venue that has just hosted the world indoor championships this month, have also been tipped as front-runners.

German city Stuttgart, the venue of the 1993 world showpiece, is also being talked of as a perfect stand-in.

Mexico withdrew its bids on Wednesday over the country's worsening financial crisis, which also caused it to abandon plans to bid football's 2002 World Cup at the start of the month. IAAF President Primo

Nebiolo said "a number of alternatives" were available.

Even before Wednesday's announcement, Madrid had already expressed an interest in hosting the championships if Mexico pulled out.

In an exchange of letters released by the IAAF, Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de Leon referred to his country's "recent number of serious, exceptional problems, particularly in the economic sector."

He wrote: "...Following profound analysis, I regret to inform you the Mexico must renounce the organization of the 1997 World Championships."

Nebiolo, while "greatly saddened," told the president he fully understood the "painful motives."

He added: "Fortunately for us the world athletics movement is experiencing a period of stability and strength and I therefore feel confident that your decision will not severely impede

our activity."

Nebiolo told the president the IAAF would do everything possible to find a "suitable and dignified alternative."

The IAAF hopes to be able to name a replacement soon.

Mexico's decision to pull out came as no great surprise as the country continues to struggle with its economic problems.

Two weeks ago Mexico told soccer's world governing body FIFA that it no longer wanted to host the 2002 World Cup.

Alarm bells have been ringing in athletics corridors for some time and a special four-man committee had been set up at the beginning of the month by organizers in Mexico City to assess whether it was still economically feasible to stage the competition.

Seville has already applied for the 1999 championships, while Paris, Manchester, Athens and Johannesburg are also expected to bid.

Seville has already applied for the 1999 championships, while Paris, Manchester, Athens and Johannesburg are also expected to bid.

## Cavs cool off Jazz as Mark Price returns



Mark Price #25 of the Cleveland Cavaliers dribbles around an opponent (AP photo)

CLEVELAND (R) — The Cleveland Cavaliers celebrated the return of star point guard Mark Price by cooling off the red-hot Jazz 93-85 on Thursday, ending Utah's nine-game winning streak.

Bobby Phills scored 24 points and Terrell Brandon had 18, including a pair of key baskets down the stretch, to lead the Cavs.

Karl Malone scored 21 points for the Jazz, who lost their first First Road Game to an Eastern Conference team this season.

Utah, now 47-17 and 11-1 on the road against the East, squandered a chance to move into a tie with idle Orlando (48-16) for the best record in the league.

Price, who had missed the last 27 games with a broken right wrist, scored 10 points, including five in a 12-4 run that opened the fourth quarter.

"I can play a lot better but I know that it will come," Price said. "I just have to get out and play and get used to being out on the court again."

"Price's return was exactly what we needed," Cavs coach Mike Fratello said. "It gave Brandon a break."

In Charlotte, Charles Barkley scored 29 points, including a 3-pointer with 5.3 seconds remaining that lifted the Phoenix Suns to 108-105 victory over the slumping Hornets.

Barkley's trey from the right top of the circle snapped a 105-105 tie. A 3-pointer by Hersey Hawkins with 53 seconds left had pulled Charlotte into the last tie of the game.

"I was very lucky and fortunate to hit that last shot," said Barkley, who had 15 rebounds. "I did not care if I made or missed as long as it was a good shot."

Kevin Johnson had 17

The Kings, who have lost 12 of their last 14 contests, saw the Nuggets draw within one-half game of them for the final Western Conference playoff spot.

In Houston, Kenny Smith scored seven of his 23 points during a first-quarter spurt and the Rockets coasted to their fourth straight win, 104-97 over the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Hakeem Olajuwon and Carl Herrera scored 19 points apiece for the Rockets, who led 56-42 at halftime and held a 22-point margin after three quarters.

Seattle Rooks scored 21 points for the Timberwolves, who have lost six of their last seven games.

In Portland, Terry Porter and Jerome Kersey combined for 30 points off the bench to lift the surging Trail Blazers to a 113-98 victory over the Boston Celtics.

Rod Strickland had 19 points and 14 assists for the Blazers, who recorded their fifth victory in six games.

Dominique Wilkins scored 25 points and Sherman Douglas and Dee Brown added 18 apiece for the Celtics, who have lost six in a row, matching their longest slide of the season.

In Seattle, Detlef Schrempf scored 18 points to lead six of his teammates in double figures as the Supersonics recorded their best defensive effort of the season in a 103-78 rout of the Miami Heat.

Gary Payton scored 16 points and Ervin Johnson added a career-high 15 for the Supersonics, who held the Heat to their season-low point total and limited high-scoring Miami forward Glen Rice to seven points.

Kevin Gamble scored 16 points for Miami, losers of five straight games.

points and 12 assists for Phoenix (47-16), which blew a 19-point third-quarter lead but moved a half game ahead of Utah in the race for the best record in the West.

Larry Johnson scored 21 points, Muggsy Bogues had 19 points and 12 assists and Alonzo Mourning got 18 points and 12 rebounds for the Hornets, who lost their third straight game, matching their longest slide of the season.

In San Antonio, David Robinson scored 10 of his 26 points in the third quarter and the Spurs seemed unaffected by the absence of Dennis Rodman in a 12-86 rout of the hapless Philadelphia 76ers.

Rodman, who leads the league in rebounding but has been in and out of trouble this season, did not arrive at

the Alamodome until about 30 minutes after tip-off. By that time, the Spurs already held a 10-point lead.

Sean Elliott added 20 points for the Spurs, who led by as many as 35 points. San Antonio has won 11 of its last 13 games and has beaten Philadelphia six straight times.

Mitch Richmond led the Kings with 17 points.

### RESULTS

	93	Utah	85
Phoenix	108	Charlotte	105
Houston	104	Minnesota	97
San Antonio	112	Philadelphia	86
Denver	123	Sacramento	101
Portland	113	Boston	98
Seattle	103	Miami	76

## Top seeds cruise in NCAA

MEMPHIS (R) — Manhattan topped Oklahoma and Miami of Ohio stunned Arizona before three top seeds rolled to comfortable first-round wins as the NCAA Basketball tournament got underway in true "March madness" fashion on Thursday.

Regional top seeds Wake Forest (East), Kentucky (Southeast) and Kansas (Midwest) each bad their way with 16th-seeded opening-round opponents.

West top seed UCLA, which enters the tournament as the nation's top ranked team for the first time since 1975, will play Florida International.

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Both vulnerable. West deals.

NORTH  
♦9  
♦10 5 4 3 2  
3 10 4  
♦J 7 3 2

WEST  
♦A 8 5 4  
♦K 9 2  
♦A Q 7  
♦A K 9 2  
♦Q J 7 5 2

SOUTH  
♦K 8  
8  
8  
♦A Q 10 7 2  
♦A Q 6 4

The bidding turned into a disaster.

West led the king of diamonds and East dropped the queen, the correct technical play from a holding including the queen and jack.

The defenders were on the right track when West continued with a diamond, forcing declarer to ruff.

But when South led a low spade and West ducked, declarer had gained a valuable tempo and an even more vital entry to dummy to take the club finesse.

The jack of clubs was covered with the king and taken by the ace. The ace of spades was forced out.

declarer ruffed the diamond continuation, drew trumps and ran clubs to score an overtrick.

West should have risen with the ace of trumps and continued to force declarer with a diamond. With no entry to dummy, the best declarer can do is win five trump tricks and the ace of clubs. All the defenders need do is exit with a red suit whenever they gain the lead and declarer will be held to six tricks. Try it.

West's failure to rise with the ace of spades resulted in a four-trick swing!

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<b>INTERSECTION</b> Richard Gere & Sharon Stone in Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	<b>TIME COP</b> Jean-Claude Van Damme Showed in the morning Patrick Swayze — in <b>FATHER HOOD</b> Showed in the evening	<b>STREET FIGHTER</b> Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:45, 11:00			

## Jordan needs new ideas to address debts — Nabulsi

By P.V. Vivekanand  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter



AMMAN — Jordan needs ideas to reduce its foreign debts after having brought down its external obligations to about \$5 billion in 1994 from more than \$8 billion in 1989, Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) Governor Mohammad Nabulsi said Friday.

Dr. Nabulsi also corrected a comment attributed to him by the official news agency that the Kingdom was hoping to reduce its external debt to \$3 billion in the next three years.

"What I said was that we have managed to reduce our foreign debts by \$3 billion in last five years," Dr. Nabulsi told the Jordan Times, referring to the comment carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra. "I did not speak about future prospects at all."

Dr. Nabulsi was referring to a briefing he presented to a visiting British delegation on Wednesday on Jordan's monetary status and policies.

Speaking to the Jordan Times on Friday, the Central Bank governor noted that Jordan's external debts stood at more than \$8 billion in 1988-89, when the burden sent the Kingdom's economy into a spin leading to a devaluation of the dinar.

Since then, the Kingdom, following a strict economic restructuring programme in coordination with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), stabilised the currency and secured debt rescheduling and partial debt write-off to bring down the figure to around \$5 billion.

France has offered \$5 million debt relief and is in the process of finalising a debt-equity swap of \$100 million. In real terms, the swap means a reduction of around \$30 million.

Dr. Nabulsi noted that Jordan also borrowed around \$500 million in the past five years, and, as such, the reduction in real terms was around \$2.5 billion.

"Now we need new ideas to reduce the debts further," Dr. Nabulsi told the Jordan Times, noting that Japan, which holds about \$1.3 billion of Jordan's debts, does not offer debt write-off.

In principle, World Bank officials say that Jordan should bring down its foreign debts to about 75 per cent of its gross domestic product to regain its pre-1988 international credit rating. This would mean a figure of about \$3.5 billion.

Given that increasing the GDP to over \$5 billion involves larger investments and economic activity, the Kingdom has to seek further debt write-off to bring its external debts to the suggested ratio.

European diplomats, notably French and German, have said that their governments may not be very forthcoming in extending further debt relief to Jordan. Michel Bock, the German chargé d'affaires, also said recently that it may not be good for Jordan's chances of attracting foreign investments if the Kingdom received further debt relief. His argument was that if Jordan were to receive

The U.S. offered a debt write-off of around \$700 million, Britain of \$75 million, Germany of about \$50 million, and Switzerland of about \$25 million. Jordan still owes the U.S. about \$140 million and the U.K. about \$550 million, but these are commercial debts extended in the form of export credit guarantees.

(Continued on page 7)

## Khomeini proclaimed dead

NICOSIA (AP) — Ahmad Khomeini, son of the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and an engineer in the Byzantine world of Iranian politics, died Friday. He was 50.

After six days in coma, Khomeini "left for heavily abode today, plunging the nation in gloom," the official Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) said.

A cleric and politician, Khomeini suffered a massive cardiac arrest Sunday and was pronounced "brain dead" after his admission to Baqiyatollah hospital in North Tehran.

A 30-man medical team struggled to keep him alive. But he succumbed to complications that left his liver, kidneys and respiratory system malfunctioning.

On Thursday, he was put on a life support machine after he was no longer able to breathe on his own. Dr. Hassan Arefi told IRNA. He died at 3 p.m. (1130 GMT) Friday.

After years of living in the long shadow of his father, patriarch of the 1979 Islamic revolution, the younger Khomeini had been expected to make a grab for power following the ayatollah's death on June 3, 1989.

But instead he remained largely in the shadows, apparently seeking to act as a

Mohammad Nabulsi

The main components in the debt reduction were: the cancellation of a nearly \$1 billion aircraft deal with France, the buyback of \$900 million in commercial debts owed to foreign banks and about \$25 million owed to Brazil, and a partial buyback deal with the Soviet Union.

The deal with foreign banks involved rescheduling of the repayment but the government has already made provision to meet the obligation after 30 years as well as payment of interest in the meantime (official figures show that the total dues of the Kingdom in this respect are about \$195 million).

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(Continued on page 7)

Pahlavi, which gave him considerable influence.

Khomeini returned to Tehran after 14 years in exile on Feb. 1, 1979 after Pahlavi had been forced into exile. Ten days later, the Shah's last government collapsed and the Islamic republic was proclaimed.

During the late Khomeini's declining health from cancer, Ahmad and his married sister, Zahra, manipulated to a large extent what their father was told about political events.

As the old man's health failed, Ahmad's political ambitions heightened. But his father apparently stifled them. In 1980, then-President Abol Hassan Banisadr proposed Ahmad as prime minister, but the ayatollah refused to allow his son to accept the post.

Many saw Ahmad as a weak person, easily influenced by more mature officials. His alliances, like many in Byzantine world of Tehran politics, switched several times over the years.

But he played a prominent role in persuading his father to disinherit his designated successor, Ayatollah Montazeri, in May 1989 because of his growing public criticism of the regime. He may have sought to elbow Ayatollah Montazeri aside so he could inherit his father's mantle.

Hasbemi Rafsanjani's election as president on July 28, 1989, to all intents and purposes blocked Ahmad's hopes of attaining high office and political power in the emotional fallout after his father's death.

The appointment of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, a Rafsanjani ally, to succeed Khomeini as Iran's spiritual leader was another setback for Ahmad.

Ahmad had been his father's eyes and ears during their days in exile and through the Islamic revolution that toppled the late Shah Mohammad Reza

some have families in the city, according to sources. Little else was known about them.

The four non-Pakistanis were being held under the foreigners act, which allows police to hold anyone suspected of violating immigration laws.

The two Pakistani citizens were being held under a law called the maintenance of public order, which allows authorities to detain anyone for up to 90 days without charge.

The suspects have been identified as Fazel Omar, Adel Attayaha, and Bahaudin, all Sudanese; Ibrahim Rasul, an Iranian; Fazlullah Hamidi, a Pakistani; and Saleem Abdul Rahim, a Syrian native who has become a Pakistani citizen.

Peshawar, a rough-and-ready frontier town near the border with Afghanistan, became a hotbed for militants during the 1980s.

Thousands of young Muslim men, mostly Arabs, descended on Peshawar to receive military training, and then entered Afghanistan to battle the Soviet troops and the communist Afghan government. The United States spent billions of dollars to provide weapons to the Afghan resistance groups that trained the militants.

## U.S., Pakistan hope for insight into attacks after new arrests

ISLAMABAD (AP) — With the arrests of six suspects, Pakistan and the United States hope to uncover new evidence about the murky, mysterious world of Ramzi Yousef, alleged mastermind of New York's World Trade Center bombing.

Pakistan police said Friday they had arrested six men with links to Mr. Yousef, who was apprehended Feb. 7 in Islamabad and extradited to New York to stand trial for the 1993 attack that left six dead and more than 1,000 injured.

Mr. Yousef allegedly called some or all of the suspects shortly before his arrest. The six were picked up March 11 in the northwestern city of Peshawar, and have been undergoing questioning at the Adiala jail in Rawalpindi, just outside Islamabad.

Pakistan authorities have not linked the arrests to the World Trade Centre attack and have not filed any serious charges against the suspects — three Sudanese, an Iranian, a Pakistani, and a naturalised Pakistani born in Syria, according to officials.

However, investigators hope to find additional information about Mr. Yousef and possible links to a broader network.

The United States has worked closely with Pakistan on the Yousef case. The

Americans were tight-lipped about the latest arrests, though one diplomat said he was not aware of any U.S. plans to seek extradition of the suspects.

U.S. officials and Americans living in Peshawar have been advised to take extra security precautions against a possible anti-American backlash.

Two American workers at the U.S. consulate in the southern city of Karachi were gunned down March 8. The motive for the attack is not known, but a Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) anti-terrorism team is looking into the possibility that the shooting was retaliation for Mr. Yousef's arrest and execution.

American and Pakistani law enforcement officers, acting on a tip, tracked down Mr. Yousef at a guest house in Islamabad last month. Workers said Mr. Yousef made at least two calls to Peshawar the night before his arrest. The phone numbers were logged by the guest house staff and provided to police.

Four of the six men arrested shared an apartment and phone in Peshawar, according to the News, an English-language daily. At least three had links to Islamic relief groups. The men have lived in Peshawar for years, and

some have families in the city, according to sources. Little else was known about them.

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DEPARTURE: Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, accompanied by his Egyptian counterpart Atef Sedki, reviews a guard of honour at Cairo airport upon his

departure for home on Friday after a two-day meeting of the Jordanian-Egyptian Higher Committee (see page one) (Petra photo)

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### King donates JD 50,000 to Lebanon

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Thursday made a personal donation of JD 50,000 to support the steadfastness of the Israeli-occupied South Lebanon. The donation comes after a call by the Lebanese government to support the people of South Lebanon in observance of the 17th anniversary of the first Israeli invasion of South Lebanon. A statement issued by the Lebanese embassy in Amman on Monday called on Lebanese citizens inside and outside their country to commemorate the day by contributing donations, initiating development projects and launching campaigns in support of the Lebanese held in Israeli jails.

### King, Queen condole Menem

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Thursday sent a cable of condolences to Argentine President Carlos Menem expressing his and Her Majesty Queen Noor's sympathies over the death of his son, Carlos Menem Jr. The Argentine president's son was killed Wednesday in a helicopter crash.

### Pope considering Middle East trips

ROME (AP) — Pope John Paul II is considering a series of trips to the Middle East as part of church celebrations for 2000, his spokesman said Wednesday. Visits to Mount Sinai and holy places in Syria, Iraq and elsewhere is the Pope's "dream," said Joaquin Navarro. Speaking on a television programme on celebrations for the new millennium, Mr. Navarro said Pope John Paul hoped to make one or more trips by 2000. Mr. Navarro did not give details on the possible sites for a papal visit, but noted that some of the areas have important significance in the Bible.

### Greece, Iran sign security accord

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran and Greece have signed a security cooperation accord to combat international terrorism, drug trafficking and the smuggling of antiquities, the official Islamic Republic News Agency reported. The agency said the accord was signed in Tehran Thursday by Greek Public Order Minister Stelios Papathemelis and Iranian Interior Minister Mohammad Ali Beshtari.

### Saudi dissident evades British deportation

LONDON (R) — A Saudi dissident evaded deportation from Britain on Friday for the second time and his lawyers said immigration authorities wanted to arrest the man. A spokeswoman for Britain's Home Office confirmed Ahmad Khodair Said Al Zahrani — a former vice-consul at the Saudi consulate in Houston, Texas — had not obeyed orders to turn up at London's Gatwick airport at 10 a.m. "We are seeking to remove him," she said but declined to make any further comment.

### Palestinians call off visit to Israeli site

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Young members of the Fatah movement called off an unprecedented visit to the Holocaust memorial of Yad Vashem here on Friday, their Israeli hosts said. Bassem Al Baz and Ibrahim Karieh, both of the Fatah's youth movement from Gaza, were expected at the memorial. The Palestinians received a telephone call from Gaza telling them not to go after their visit was announced by the Israeli media, their hosts said. But there was no explanation of the move. Calling off the visit smacked of "the traditional Arab attitude of denying the Nazi genocide," charged the organisers, the youth wing of Israel's ruling Labour Party.

### Islamic Jihad paper reappears after ban

GAZA CITY (AP) — A pro-Islamic Jihad weekly reappeared Friday, a month after Palestinian police detained its journalists in the wake of anti-Israeli violence claimed by the hardline group. Five of Al Isqa's eight journalists are still behind bars, held in the police crackdown following a suicide bombing near Tel Aviv that claimed 21 Israeli lives in January. Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the attack, carried out by two Gazans. Al Isqa's board apologised to its readers for being six pages thinner than usual and blamed the lack on the continued detention of its five journalists. "Al Isqa was closed down because it gives the people a voice and presents their issues. It has returned stronger than before," the paper's editorial said.

### Four beheaded in S. Arabia for murder

RIYADH (AP) — Three Saudis and a Pakistani found guilty of murder were beheaded on Friday, raising the number of executions in Saudi Arabia to 39 so far this year. Ghoulam Farid of Pakistan was executed by sword in the western town of Al Baha for killing and robbing a Saudi woman, according to interior ministry statements broadcast on television. Two Saudi brothers, Ali and Abdullah Ben Ahmad Sami, were beheaded in the northwest Tabuk region for the murder and attempted rape of a young boy, the statement said. A third Saudi, Ali Ben Hilal Al Harbi, was executed in Medina in the west of the kingdom for bludgeoning a man to death with a hammer. Meanwhile two Pakistani men and an Egyptian woman had their right hands amputated for theft.

## Jordan to tap Eurobond market soon for \$50m

By a Jordan Times staff reporter

AMMAN — Jordan will soon make a formal announcement of its first venture into the Eurobonds market since 1988 with a \$50 million issue to finance expansion of its telecommunications sector, official sources said.

They said the seven-year bonds, which will be guaranteed by the World Bank, would have a yield of around 8.5 per cent.

The government's Economic Consultative Committee (ECC), which groups key ministers, economic experts and private sector representatives, discussed the issue this week and an formal announcement is expected soon, the sources said.

The proceeds from the Eurobonds, managed by an international bank in Europe, will be used by the state-owned Telecommunications Corporation (TCC), which will guarantee the interest on the paper, they said.

(Continued on page 9)

## Russia defies American pressure over Iran deal

MOSCOW (Agencies) — A Russian government official said on Friday Moscow would not bow to U.S. pressure to stop selling nuclear technology to Iran, although Washington plans to raise the issue at high-level talks next week.

Yuri Kotov, head of the Foreign Ministry's Third Asia Department, told Russia's Interfax News agency that Moscow would push on with a contract worth up to \$1 billion to help Iran build a nuclear plant at Bushehr on the Gulf coast.

Russia would not "follow orders from third countries," he said, brushing aside U.S. fears that the reactors could help Tehran develop its own nuclear arsenal.

"It is important that Iran is open to inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency and none of the inspections has so far found any violations by Tehran," he said.

A senior U.S. official said on Wednesday that Secretary of State Warren Christopher would discuss the problem with Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev.

The official said Washington would cite its cancellation of a lucrative oil deal between a U.S. firm and Iran in the talks to try to persuade Russia not to go ahead with the deal.

## Turkey lifts Istanbul curfew; Ciller promises riots probe

ISTANBUL (R) — Turkish officials on Friday lifted a curfew on Istanbul's sprawling Umraniye neighbourhood after days of civil unrest, despite reports of overnight bombing attacks around the city.

Unknown attackers hurled petrol bombs overnight at targets in five districts, including a pastry shop in Umraniye and a mosque in Gazi district, where the unrest began on Sunday. Anatolian news agency said. There were no casualties.

A spokeswoman for the Istanbul provincial governor's office said the curfew was lifted in Umraniye at 6:30 a.m. (0430 GMT), two days after four people died when protesters and police clashed in the working-class area on Istanbul's Asian side.

At least 17 people have been killed and some 100 wounded in the rioting since Sunday.

Prime minister Tansu Ciller said there would be an investigation into riots that

began on Sunday night when unknown gunmen fired on coffee shops of the minority Muslim Alawite community